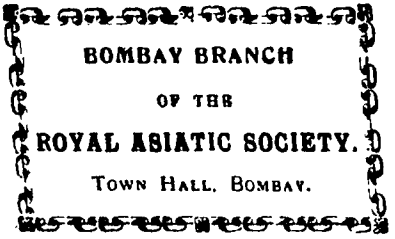
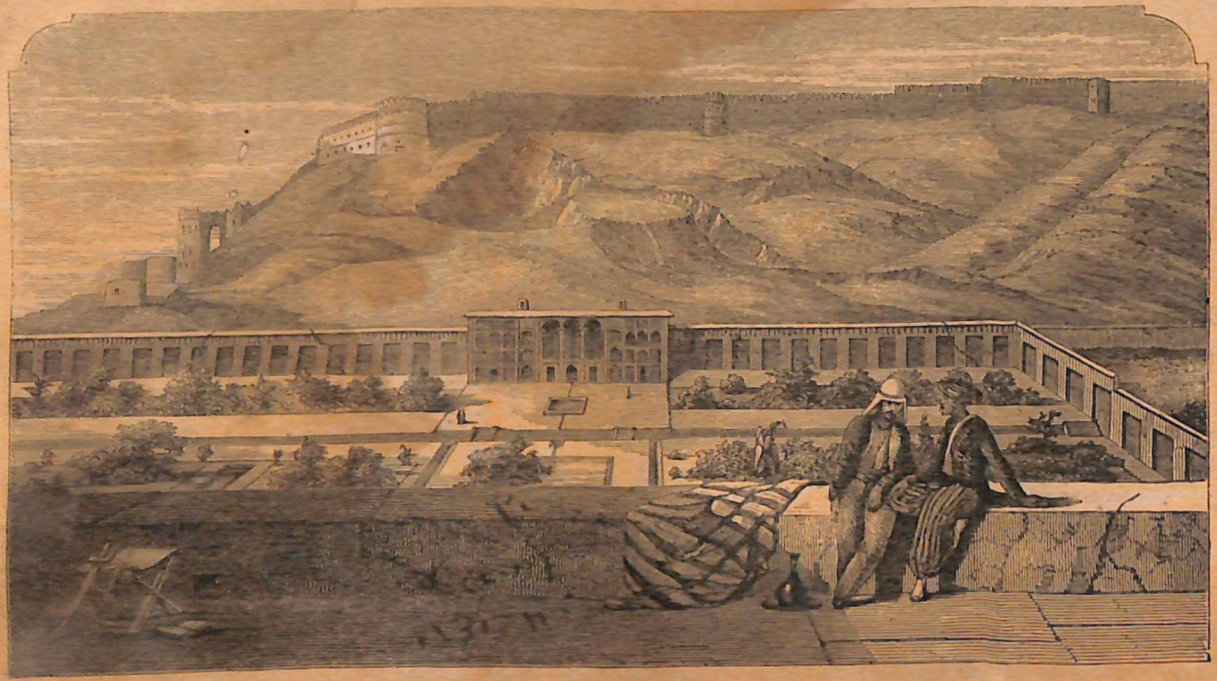
NOT TO BE ISSUED
OUT OF THE LIBRARY.



Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 19 September, 2016



OFFICERS' QUARTERS, BALA HISSAR

FROM

CADET TO COLONEL.

The Record of a Life of Active Service.

BY

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR THOMAS SEATON, K.C.B.

20265
a2

LAHORE GATE, BALA HISSAR.

IN TWO VOLS.—VOL. I.

XX-6-52

LONDON:

HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1866.

The right of Translation is reserved.

00020265

TO

SIR HENRY MONTGOMERY, BART.

MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF INDIA, ETC.

THE FRIEND WHO HAS WATCHED

WITH INTEREST

THE AUTHOR'S CAREER THROUGH MANY OF THE SCENES

HEREIN DESCRIBED,

This Work is Dedicated.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

CHAPTER I.

Off to India—Voyage—Land in Calcutta—"Master, where come from?"—Barrackpoor—My first Regiment—How we were instructed in Drill—Comical Fogs—The Bore—My Boat up Country—New Bread out of Old—A Dodge—Cawnpoor—Its Thieves—Bhowanny—Your Syce is a Thug—Marching . . . . . pp. 1—25

CHAPTER II.

Join my Regiment—State of Society—Captain ——, his Career and Miserable End—March for Seetapoor—Treasure Party Escapes Attack—Drill—Moonshee—A Tiger—Our Chokeydar, Tokee—Wild Appearance—Thieves' Anecdotes—Learning to Swim—Nearly Drowned by a Friend—Sent back to my old Regiment—March during Rainy Season—Join the 35th N.I.—The Regimental Bard—The Doog Dooge Walla . . . . pp. 26—49

CHAPTER III.

Rajah of Bhurtpoor Dies—His Heir succeeds—Dethroned by his Uncle—Sir D. Ochterlony assem-

bles a Force to replace him—Countermanded—Force eventually sent against Bhurtpoor—Siege commenced—First Appearance under Fire—"Come on, Boys"—General Nichols and his "Unfeeling" Parties—The Futteh Boorj—Heavy Fire—Working Parties—Trench Duty—Breakfast—"Comfortable Dogs"—A Smash of Teapots and Crockery—A Man-hunt—Tally-ho!—A Desertion—Alarm in the Fort—Brilliant Light—The Storm—Immense Guns at Weer . . . . . pp. 50—77

CHAPTER IV.

New System of Drill introduced—All Hail, Sir Henry (Torrens)—Baron Osten—Escort Lord Combermere—Fair at Thaneysir—Officers—Competition Wallahs—March for Barrackpoor—Half-batta Order—Dismay and Mischief it created—Lord W. Bentinck and Commanding Officers of Regiments—Hated by every one—Parades—Colonel ——'s Dinner-party — The 'Bus and the Brigadier — Marriage — Regiment leaves for Jumualpoor — A Village depopulated by Cholera — Horrible Sight—Reach Jumualpoor—Turn Carpenter, &c., &c., and build a House—Hog Hunting—Anecdotes—Misfortune—Sorrow—Return Home. pp. 78—106

CHAPTER V.

Return to India—News of Affghan Campaign—Proceed to Simla—To Ferozepoor—Sir H. Lawrence—Join Convoy going down the Indus—Boats—Queer Mode of Fishing on the Indus—Canals—Arrive at Sukkur — Difficulties—Reach Shikarpoor — Join

Convoy—First March—Terrible Heat—Rear-guard —Council of War—Cross the Desert—Aidena—Dreadful March and Mortality—Reach Baugh, and Passage of the Desert accomplished pp. 107—142

CHAPTER VI.

Baugh—Reports that our Kafilah had perished—March—A Large Piece of Water—Air Cooled—Rest and Recovery—Dadur—Bolan Pass—Formidable Defile—Quettah—Kojuck Pass—Candahar—Spot in the Sun—Ghuznee—Death of Colonel Herring—Cabool . . . . . pp 143—166

CHAPTER VII.

Cabool—Baber's Tomb—"Syle"—Left in Garrison at Cabool—Quarters: for Men, for Officers—Winter Clothing—H.M. 13th and 35th N.I.—Guard-mounting and Wonder of Caboolees—Sliding—Skating—Astonishment of Caboolees—Christmas Eve—A "Big Snow"—Move into Camp—Build a Hut—March to Bameean—Zohauk—Action with Dost Mohammed—Syghan and Fort of Sir-i-Sung—Return—Return to Bameean—The Great Idol—Skeleton of a Dragon—Return to Cabool. pp. 167—204

CHAPTER VIII.

Outbreak at Cabool commences—March to Bootkhak —Night Attack on our Camp—Repulsed—Sale comes out to join us—Force the Khoord Cabool Pass—Posted at Eastern Outlet of the Pass—Sale Returns to Bootkhak—Warning—Night Attack on our Camp—Heavy Loss—Enemy Repulsed—Sale

Arrives—March to Teyzeen—Action—Jugdulluck —Affair of Rear Guard—Gundummuck—Futteabad —Affair of Rear Guard—We have our Revenge— Cha-a-rge—Reach Jellalabad . . pp. 205—245

CHAPTER IX.

Jellalabad—Council of War—Decides to occupy the Town—Take Stock of Commissariat—Surrounded by the Enemy—Sortie 14th November—Beat off the Enemy—They Disperse—Commence to Repair Fortifications—Mode Adopted—Quarters—Kaffiristan—Garrison Duty—Enemy Gathering Again—A Tremendous Explosion—Turn out the Garrison —A Laugh—Sortie 1st December—Enemy Beaten and Dispersed—"Shahbash, Angrez"—Effects of Victory—Evil Tidings—Set up a Still—Elphinstone's Capitulation, and Order to us—Disregarded —Khyberries Dismissed—Ditch round the Town commenced . . . . . pp. 246—281

CHAPTER X.

News of the Destruction of the Cabool Army—Dr. Brydon, the sole Survivor, comes in—A Goorkah and the Sergeant-Major 37th N.I. come in—Their Tales—The Great Earthquake—Our Defences Destroyed—Akber Khan with his Army appears before Jellalabad—Siege—Turned to Blockade—Progress of the Siege—Victory, 7th April—Akber Routed —Pollock and his Force arrive . . pp. 282—327

CHAPTER I.

Off to India—Voyage—Land in Calcutta—"Master, where come from?"—Barrackpoor—My first Regiment—How we were instructed in Drill—Comical Fogs—The Bore—My Boat up Country—New Bread out of Old—A Dodge—Cawnpoor—Its Thieves—Bhowanny—Your Syce is a Thug—Marching.

IN July 1822, a cousin called at our house, and, without any preamble, addressed me as follows:

"Tom, would you like to go to India as a cadet?"

"Yes, very much."

The resolution so speedily adopted was without delay acted upon, and the necessary preparations having been made with all due speed, on that day week I was sailing away from Spithead, on board the H.E.I.C.'s ship *Thames*, Captain Heaviside, bound for Calcutta.

I had received what was called a good classical education—that is to say, a small amount of Latin and Greek, which had been caned and flogged into me at a certain, or rather uncertain, rate per week, in the old brutal style; and as I had "no turn" naturally for these languages, this method of teaching, instead of inspiring me

with any love for them, made me utterly abhor both teacher and teaching, and rendered my young life a burthen, with all the sorrows and none of the pleasures of which classical literature was to be ever henceforth associated. As our master was an M.A. of Oxford, classics with him were everything. Useful knowledge, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, or any science which made us acquainted with the objects necessary to be known in our daily life and conversation, were considered unworthy of any particular attention. Accordingly, five hours per week was the amount of time allowed for these foundations of all knowledge; and eventually, though with some reluctance, one of these hours was deducted, and applied to the acquisition of French.

Before I was sixteen I was sent to a school in London, to learn something of writing and arithmetic. After I had acquired some knowledge of these important, though by many considered secondary, branches of education, I was then sent (to be initiated into business) to an office, where I had very little to do, and was idle half my time. Five months after attaining my sixteenth year, I took the important step of throwing myself on the world as above related—a raw, half-educated lad, ignorant of its many ways, unwarned of its many snares, unarmed against its trials and temptations, and without compass,

chart, or rudder to direct my course in my voyage over that treacherous ocean. Thus was I, equally destitute of the theoretical knowledge or of the practical experience of life, left to sink or swim as chance might happen, or rather as a merciful and overruling Providence might direct.

A favourable chance occurred, by which I was enabled to proceed to India without delay. A young cadet who had sailed in the *Thames* from Blackwall got so mammy sick that he was compelled to leave the ship in the Downs. When my friends heard of it they immediately secured the cadetship for me, on certain conditions. As the *Thames* was the last ship of the season, I was obliged to go by it, or not at all. It was rather sharp work, and considered a more than ordinarily clever feat—and although I succeeded, by great exertion, in getting off with the vessel, I suffered for it afterwards.

The voyage from London to Calcutta, *viâ* the Cape, or Overland, is nowadays as well known as the passage from London Bridge to Gravesend was in the time I am writing about. I shall, therefore, only mention two circumstances connected with our voyage as worth noting. One was that our captain, wishing to achieve a remarkable feat in the way of a rapid voyage, tried what was called the Inner Passage—that

is, instead of standing over towards America to meet the trade winds, he ran down the coast of Africa, sighting Cape Palmas. The consequence was the very opposite of what he had intended or anticipated, the only thing for which our voyage was remarkable being its extreme slowness, for we were nearly six months getting to Calcutta. The other noticeable circumstance was, that one night, when off Cape Palmas, we sailed for several hours through a white luminous matter, that threw a light on the sails of the ship nearly equal to the light of the moon. There were here and there broad lanes in it, looking by contrast black as Erebus, along which globes of fire appeared to dart. Sometimes we sailed along the lanes, sometimes we crossed them, and in every instance the edges of the lanes were as sharp and clear as if cut with an instrument. I have since been five times backwards and forwards between Calcutta and England, but have never again been so fortunate as to witness this beautiful and remarkable phenomenon.

A very melancholy circumstance occurred during this voyage, which spread gloom over all hearts on board. While we were running before a light wind, the driver jibbed, and the boom struck overboard a young cadet of the name of Guillod, whose mother was a widow, and he her

only child. A boat was instantly lowered, and every exertion was made to save him, but all in vain; they only came up with some pieces of the block that had given way, and picked up his hat. As he must have been stunned by the boom, and perhaps injured by the quarter-gallery as he fell overboard, he must have sunk instantly. He was a quiet, steady, amiable young fellow, very much liked by his shipmates, and sincerely lamented by all on board.

When, after our very tedious voyage, we arrived off the Sandheads, three of my comrades and myself hired one of the boats that came off to meet us below Saugor Point, and we went off in it to Calcutta. Heartily tired of our six months' confinement to the ship, we were glad to get out of it, and change the monotony of the quarter-deck and the wearying sight of sea and sky for green fields and trees, houses and villages, and—who could say?—a tiger, perhaps, or some other Indian wonder. The passage up the river was by no means tedious, though far longer than we expected. We did not reach Calcutta until near midnight of the 1st of January, 1823. The boat landed us at Chandpunt ghaut (stairs), and we stepped on shore utter strangers, with no one to welcome us, in a land many thousand miles distant from our native country. We neither knew where to go to

nor what to do. Not a word of the language could any of us speak, and as our boatmen could not understand a word of English, it may be imagined how forlorn we youths, strangers to the world, felt at such a moment. In a few minutes we decided upon getting into the boat, and waiting for daylight, but as we turned round to go to the boat, we saw an apparition in white coming towards us, which turned out to be a native in a long, and—to us—queer-looking garment. Coming straight up to where we were standing in all our loneliness, this strange-looking figure addressed us—

"Master, where come from?"

"From England," one of us, acting as spokesman for the rest, replied.

"Master belong ship. What business make?"

"We are officers."

"Oh, officers. Master, where go now?"

"Don't know. Where is the fort? Is there any hotel?"

"'Tis a long way all officer gentleman's sleep. Master go punch ghur (punch house).

"What is a punch ghur?"

"'Ah, master go some eaty drinky sleep bed."

"Yes, we will go."

"Master give a littil present—backshish—then I show way—boatmans carry things."

Under the direction of this figure in white,

whom at the moment we regarded as a heaven-sent guide, we set off, and in ten minutes were introduced to a low kind of public-house, frequented by the mates and petty officers of the few ships in port. In this very uninviting hostel we found some debauched-looking fellows smoking, drinking, and playing at billiards. It was indeed a wretched place after a long and tedious voyage; but, as sailors say, any port in a storm. Dingy, mouldy, and dissipated-looking as the place was, we were right glad of the shelter it afforded us in our hour of need; and after getting some supper, and declining all invitations to drink, we tumbled, half asleep, into bed. Next morning, 2nd January, 1823, we were up in good time and got an early breakfast, and by the advice and with the assistance of a not very sober-looking officer, we hurried off to the fort, reported our arrival, and were at once taken possession of by the superintendent of cadets, who gave us quarters in the South Barracks, introduced us to the cadets' mess, and made his people supply us with all needful articles of barrack furniture. From the superintendent we learnt the character of the punch ghur and its frequenters, and he told us we were lucky to get out of it without a row. The not very sober-looking officer, he told us, was under suspension by a sentence of a general court-martial; but he

had certainly acted the part of a true friend in hurrying us off from such a den.

In those good (?) old times, when the Company monopolized the trade of India, with the exception of an indigo-planter here and there, there were few independent Europeans in the country. Every one whom business or pleasure brought to Calcutta either had friends and acquaintances there, or brought letters of introduction to some resident. Visitors who came with such testimonies to their respectability were invariably received with generous and large-hearted hospitality, and were invited to stay as long as suited their convenience. Writers or cadets were of course provided for by Government—the former went to Writers' Building, a kind of college for them; the cadets, to the institution where we had now been received.

The cadets' mess consisted of twenty or more young men besides ourselves, some of them recently promoted to the rank of ensign, and waiting to be posted to regiments—others, like ourselves, were still cadets on the magnificent pay of 90 rupees per month. The artillery cadets and second lieutenants were the best off, as they went at once to the head-quarters of their regiment at Dum-Dum, distant only a few miles, where they were at home, and immediately sent to drill. We poor infantry cadets, whilst in Fort

William, waiting for promotion or appointment in regiments, were, on the other hand, allowed to do just as we pleased. No care was in any way taken of us. We were neither sent to drill, nor taught our duty, nor encouraged to study the native languages. The consequences may be imagined. A parcel of young lads, just released from the restraint of school and the supervision of careful friends, arriving in the country, green, ignorant, unaccustomed to self-control, and without occupation, immediately ran riot, and many of them here commenced a career of debauchery and profligacy that speedily ended in ruin. It was through God's mercy alone that such was not my case, and I am happy to say that all my shipmates had equal cause to be grateful.

I had a bran-new gun, with lots of powder and shot, and my great delight was to cross the river, wander about the country, and shoot every kind of bird I could see. I thought India one of the most glorious countries in the world, and myself one of the most fortunate of beings. I was laughed at and called a little griff, but my fondness for sport kept me out of mischief.

For upwards of a month I remained in Calcutta as a cadet, and it was not until the 4th February I was promoted to the rank of ensign, and a few days later was sent to Barrackpoor to do duty with the 1st battalion of the 10th Regi-

ment, commanded by Colonel Bowen. To convey me to my destination I chartered a native boat, and went up the river, taking all my traps with me. A fortunate chance, immediately on my arrival, threw me in the way of an acquaintance, with whom I took a share in a bungalow. I had many subsequent opportunities of associating with him, and as he was a steady fellow, some years older than myself, I was kept out of many a little scrape that my ignorance might have led me into.

My first duty, on arrival, was to report myself to the adjutant of the regiment, who at once took me to call on the colonel and the captain of my company. Now it was that my troubles began. Almost the first question that the adjutant asked me was, "Have you any uniform?" "No," truth compelled me to reply. "Have you a sword?" "No;" and, except with regard to my white regimental jackets, to the several queries which he in succession addressed to me, I could reply only by a negative.

When my friends bundled me off in such a desperate hurry they had made an arrangement, as is customary in such circumstances, agreeing to take such of the outfit provided for the young man, to whose cadetship I had succeeded, as might be found suitable for me. Of course we went to Messrs. —— & Co., his outfitters, and they persuaded my father that all the white

clothing would fit me exactly. A jacket was tried on, and, as it fitted me very well, it was rather hastily taken for granted that everything else would fit me equally well. As there was so much to be done, and so little time for doing it all, we were obliged to be content with this hasty bargain—a very imprudent step, for it was afterwards found that many of the articles inserted in the list given to my father were never put up, so that when asked by the adjutant if I had certain things necessary for one in my position, it is not to be wondered at that my replies were a succession of "No's." When I had tried on the white regimental jackets and trousers, I found that I had grown so much during the voyage, that the legs of one and the sleeves of the other were nearly two inches short, I had shot up so immensely. I was, therefore, recommended by the adjutant to go to a respectable tailor in Calcutta, who, he said, would provide me with every requisite. I accordingly followed his advice, and was soon furnished with everything of the very best quality, and really well made; but oh! the bill that came in, and oh, the blowing up I got from home when I forwarded it! What opprobrious epithets were heaped upon me! I was a spendthrift, a scapegrace, and all the rest, when the unfortunate bill was simply the natural result of being packed off in such a hurry.

When I entered the army pig-tails had just disappeared, but in full dress we still wore tights and hessians, and a precious Guy I and my comrades looked in them; indeed, I could not help laughing at myself and them when we first appeared in them.

My initiation into the mysteries of drill and parade was now begun. I found out the parade ground in proper time one morning, and going up to my captain I asked him what I was to do. "Come with me," he said; and taking me up to the company he pointed out the supernumerary rank and my proper position in it. "Now," he said, "you fall in there, and when you see me change from one flank to the other, you do the same. Mark the men who talk in the ranks. Keep your eyes and ears open, learn the words of command, remember all you can, and to-morrow I'll show you more." But on the morrow, instead of learning more, there was a parade for punishment, and I saw a sepoy get eight hundred lashes for some crime, I forget what. The sight of such fearful punishment made me shudder, and I went home so saddened and sickened by the appalling sight I had seen, that my new uniform did not appear so bright that day as it had done when I first put it on. My dislike to corporal punishment has since increased with years, but at the same time I am compelled to

avow the sad conviction that the power to inflict it, and its actual infliction in certain cases, are at times absolutely and imperatively necessary.

In those times, it was not generally customary to send young officers to drill under the adjutant; they were more frequently assembled in one of their houses, or at the adjutant's, and then taught the manual and platoon and the sword-exercise by the sergeant-major; then a book on drill, "Dundas," was put into their hands, from which work they were to learn as much as they could, and carry the theory they had acquired by study into regimental practice as well as they could. It seemed to me to be the design of colonels to make the native soldiers believe that we were born with a knowledge of drill and parade, just as they were born with arms and legs. It was, to say the least, a very foolish system.

I liked my parade duties, and took great pleasure in perfecting myself in them. I soon learned to command a subdivision, and before long found myself at the head of the company on parade in the absence of the captain. But, devoted as I was to my military pursuits, my gun was my great delight, and the day on which I shot three wild ducks at a shot was the proudest day of my young life. I was not so proud of my red coat. The first time I put it on, there was

something of awe mingled with the gratification with which I regarded myself in uniform; but my success as a shot gave me unmixed pleasure, and I carried the trophies of my skill home with intense satisfaction. They made a nice little addition to our daily fare. We new arrivals were poor caterers in those days, knowing nothing of the country, its language, or customs; and at that time there were no messes in native regiments. Officers generally lived two or three in a bungalow and messed together; or, more frequently, four or six in contiguous houses would form a little mess, and if one of their number happened to be an old hand and a tolerable manager it was a very agreeable plan. Each officer kept his own wines, and the table expenses were in common. If one of the party wished to invite a guest, timely notice was given to the manager, and a small extra charge was made. Each member of the mess sent his servant to assist in cooking the dinner, and each sent his chair, glasses, plates, knives and forks, and napkins. This was called "camp fashion." A small subscription provided dishes, cooking-vessels, and other requisites, and all the accounts were settled on pay-day.

This system had the great advantage that it did not lead to such extravagance as regimental messes undoubtedly do; the officer could live as

economically as he pleased, there were no public nights with their following heavy bills for wine, no mess balls and parties with their attendant extravagance, and no member of the little mess was called upon for any expense beyond that of his daily food. If any member was economizing to pay for a gun or a horse, some member of the mess would be sure to share with him his bottle of beer or modicum of wine, and he knew exactly what his expenses would be. Regimental messes, as managed in England, are very pleasant for young men with abundant means—I can say nothing else in their favour.

On going to parade one morning, just after I had joined the regiment, I found myself involved in such a heavy fog that I lost my way, and, though I reached the parade ground at last, could not find the regiment until I was guided to it by the colonel's word of command. Next morning the air on the roads was clear, but on the parade there was a heavy fog condensed on the ground, not more than four feet deep, just hiding the men's bodies and legs, and leaving their heads and shoulders visible like so many busts. These fogs at Barrackpoor were sometimes most eccentric, coming on in shallow strata, sometimes floating above the ground, showing only the men's legs and feet, so that when the regiment was put in motion the effect

was most comical. The vapours, again, will sometimes float just above the ground, hiding the men's bodies and showing their heads and legs. It would be well if this were all; but these fogs and the dews and night damps of Bengal are terribly destructive to the lives of sepoys, who are natives of the dry climate and soil of the North-West provinces, so much so, that when some years later the Government, oppressed by the heavy pension list, made the sepoys serve longer, our ranks became filled with old men, and our colonel used to say, "It is time the regiment was sent to Bengal to clear off these old fellows."

The great sight at Barrackpoor is the Bore or Ban, the Ægre or Eger of the Severn. This singular phenomenon occurs in the rainy season, three days before and three days after the full moon. The tide is low, but still running strongly. At first, a distant indescribable sound is heard, and then a sort of low hollow murmur which increases, approaches nearer and nearer, gradually swelling into a roar. From man to man, from boat to boat, a shrill warning-cry is conveyed up the river—*Khuburdar Ban ata*—"Take care, the Bore is coming." In the distance is seen a line of foam, passing the bend of the river, and stretching across from bank to bank. As the wave approaches the shouts increase, and the boats shove off from shore, and push for the

centre of the river, where the wave is always lowest. Keeping head up stream, the rowers pull gently, so as to give the boats a little impetus in the direction in which the wave is advancing. On it comes, roaring, rushing along the shore, smashing with irresistible fury everything left within its reach, and rolling the fragments of wreck over and over. The moment it reaches the boats they are canted up in the air, and such as are not properly steered are swamped and swallowed up by the swiftly-flowing stream. Continuing its course, the bore passes on, filling the channel from bank to bank, and leaving a dozen poor wretches swimming for their lives, and bewailing their imprudence in not pushing off in time. I once saw a fleet of boats caught by the bore. They were anchored close in shore, and were filled with artillerymen, with whom they were proceeding to Cawnpoor. How it was that the crews neglected to push off in time I am unable to say. Fortunately, as the boats were large, the consequences were not so serious as they might otherwise have been. As it was, they were dashed together like corks; one was swamped, the whole were very much damaged, and two of the artillerymen were drowned.

I remained at Barrackpoor until July, when I was posted to the 2nd battalion, 17th N. I., at Loodianah, whither I was ordered to proceed by

water. I joined a young officer of the name of Murdo, bound for the same destination; and we took a sixteen-oared budgerow between us, with a small boat for cooking in.

Travelling by boat in the rainy season, before steamers were put on the Ganges, was most tedious. It required a strong breeze aft or over the quarter to send the heavy budgerow along at a tolerable rate against the stream, which is very rapid, particularly in the rainy season. A breeze may spring up for a couple of days, but the probability then is that it dies away, and the crew have to resort to the track-rope, when the pace at which they pull the boat against the stream is about two miles an hour.

Budgerows are now extinct. Steamers nearly drove them off the river, and the railroad has extinguished them; one may perchance be found in the back slums of the "port of Calcutta," but they are now mere subjects for antiquarian curiosity. But in the days of which I write, they were the principal conveyance for officers and others proceeding to the north-western provinces. The budgerow was a heavy boat of the usual spoon-shape below and at the stern; but at the stem or head it was shaped like an English boat, and not unfrequently there was a figure-head, a hideous attempt at a European, with a black hat, a bright blue coat, and a yellow

waistcoat. There were two good-sized cabins in it—one to sit in, and one for sleeping; a closet behind, and a verandah in front. The cabins were nicely planked, and the sides, from about two feet above the deck up to the roof, were a series of venetian windows, that could be lifted and hooked up at pleasure. The roof was flat and formed a promenade in the evening, a place for the crew and our servants to sleep at night, or, an awning being made for their protection by throwing a sail over a spar.

There was a lofty mast and a topmast for a couple of large square sails. The track-rope, belayed to the foot of the mast, ran through a block below the cross-trees; it was a good stout rope from eighty to a hundred yards long, some twenty yards of it being coiled down at the foot of the mast, ready to be payed out at an emergency. From a strong ring in the deck, near the head of the boat, ran a guy-rope, which terminated in what sailors call a thimble, through which the track-rope was passed. This guy prevented the boat shearing out into the stream, when passing a bend of the river where the current is strong, as without the guy it certainly would do. I once saw a brother officer's boat upset for want of such an arrangement. The crew were pulling hard to get the boat round a point, when the current swept it suddenly out from the bank,

and it got broadside on to the stream, so that before the tugging crew knew what was going to happen, over the boat went.

The crew consisted of the manjee or captain, the golayah, who manages the luggee, and one man to each oar. The bottom of the vessel being spoon-shaped, without keel, it steers very badly, and, with the slightest side-wind, drifts to leeward; and when tracking along the shore, would constantly bump against it but for a stout pole or luggee which a man thrusts against the bank to keep the boat off. The man's unaided strength could never overcome the momentum of the boat, which is, therefore, made to help itself. In the deck-post, behind the stem, there is a very thick strong iron ring, firmly fixed by an eye-bolt, into which is spliced a stout hempen rope, eight or nine feet long. The upper part of this rope is plaited to within two feet of the deck, tapering off to the end. When the boat was steering in towards the shore the golayah seized the luggee, coiled the plaited part of the rope loosely round the upper part of it, and, when near enough to the shore, he put out the luggee, and tightened the plaited part of the rope. The end of it being fastened to the deck, it formed a fulcrum for the luggee, which at once stopped the nearer approach of the boat to the shore and gave it a new direction outwards. The

stations, civil and military, on the banks of the river are many days' journey apart, and as provisions, meat, &c., will not keep above twenty-four hours, we had to fall back upon ducks and fowls, which we kept in coops at the top of our cook-boat. We occasionally had the good fortune to procure a kid from some village we were passing. Tea, coffee, wine, beer, and groceries we kept in our own lockers, and for bread our servants cooked chupatties (cakes of unleavened bread) on a griddle. These chupatties, when well made and eaten hot, are very good. But an old officer put us up to a dodge that I strongly recommend to travellers going up the Nile. We had a large number of loaves of bread made of a round shape, crust all round, and no division in them —something like a beehive. These we had thoroughly dried like biscuits or rusks. We took with us a "bake," a flat, circular iron pan, sixteen inches in diameter and eight inches deep, standing on four short legs, and having a flat top, with a rim above and below, and a handle. When the bake was used, our servant put it over a charcoal fire, with some live coals on the top. Each day our cook took a couple of the loaves, and cut out of the bottom of each a square piece an inch and a half across. Into the hole he poured about a table-spoonful of water, and then fitted in the piece cut out. The bake

was heated, the bottom of the loaf damped and put into the bake, and the lid fitted on. In ten minutes or a little more after the loaves were put in, the heat (which was not allowed to be so great as to burn) sent the water in the shape of steam all through the dried bread, and at once quickly converted it into warm bread, sweet and good. It requires a little knack, but this is soon acquired, and the bread thus restored to its original freshness and softness makes an agreeable variety to chupatties or Arab flaps.

Arriving at Cawnpoor, Mr. M—— and myself hired a bungalow for the short time we should be at this station, preparing for our march, buying horses and tents, and getting camels and servants. We had no sooner moved into our bungalow, than we were waited on by the catwal (head man) of the chokeydars or watchmen, who invited us to take a chokeydar into our service. Like all, griffs we were disinclined to incur such an apparently useless expense; but, fortunately, some friends coming to see us set us right in the matter, telling us we should inevitably be robbed if we did not avail ourselves of the services of a chokeydar, as some of themselves had been, their traps having been cleared out in the most scientific and cracksman-like manner.

The expertness of these Indian thieves is truly remarkable. There is a well-known story, and

as true as well known, of a young officer who, having defied the thieves to rob him, had all his boxes and things taken out of his room, his gun and pistols removed from his bed, the sheets drawn from under him, and his sword stuck through the mattress.

Of course we gave in, and the catwal, who was the head of the organized thieves in the country, sent us a chokeydar, who proved to be a Kanoujeea Brahmin of the highest strain, a hearty, jolly old fellow of sixty or thereabouts; middle height, fair complexion, fine features, with an open look about him, strongly built, and as hard as nails; but oh, such a lingo! Yorkshire or the broadest Scotch was a joke to it. Old Bhowanny took to me at once, treated me quite like a little boy, and left his house and home and his old wife to go off with me. I had him in my service for eleven years; I never had occasion to find fault with him, and I only parted with him when I came home on furlough, and then I made him over to my brother. I remember the old fellow with great regard. He took as much care of me as if I had been his son. He would blow me up if I was at all imprudent, and would rate the servants soundly if they were not attentive. He would neither allow any one to cheat me, nor the servants to peculate—that besetting sin of all Indian servants.

One day, about seven months after I had him in my service, I heard a great row amongst the servants, in the midst of which old Bhowanny's voice was very distinctly heard speaking in tones of great anger. The words were followed by several blows, and then another voice was heard speaking in a tone of supplication. Presently old Bhowanny came up grinning and looking knowing, and filled my hands with coppers of all sorts, a rupee amongst the lot.

"Well, Bhowanny, what's this for?"

"Your syce (groom) Bheekun is a Thug."

"A Thug?"

"Yes; he charged you for grain for your horse at thirty seers (seer, a weight of 2 lb.) for the rupee and the price is thirty-seven, but I've made it all right, and that's the money. Why did you pay him without telling me? You're a child, and throw away your money."

Bheekun, threatened with the old Brahmin's wrath, lived in fear and trembling many a day. I used to see him salaaming the old fellow daily, standing on one foot with his joined hands up at his forehead in a supplicating position.

One thing always made me laugh. Old Bhowanny never went to the bazaar to buy his supplies of food without bringing back some hot jullaybee (a kind of sweetmeat, and very good when well made) for me, and he used to say,

"There now, it's nice and hot; eat it up." Every fortnight or three weeks for about two years he petted me in this and many other ways, until military duty separated me from the old fellow for three months, and when I returned he seemed to consider me no longer a child. I was indebted to him for many a piece of good advice, and many a rupee I should have thrown away but for him.

Marching I found thoroughly enjoyable. I had a large single-poled tent for the day-time, and a small tent for night, just large enough for my bed. At dusk when I had dined the large tent was struck and sent on to the next stage. In the morning at daybreak or sunrise I got up, mounted my horse and galloped on, found my tent pitched, breakfast ready, and my tent-pitchers, with my gun and some beaters, waiting my leisure to go out shooting. The game at almost every stage in those days was most abundant, especially between Delhi and Kurnal. From four miles out of Delhi to Kurnal there was a continuous jungle. The next time I traversed this road (in 1839) the prosperity of the country under the much-maligned East India Company had so greatly increased that every vestige of this vast jungle had disappeared, and the whole was under cultivation.

CHAPTER II.

Join my Regiment—State of Society—Captain ——, his Career and Miserable End — March for Seetapoor — Treasure Party escapes Attack—Drill—Moonshee—A Tiger — Our Chokeydar, Tokee — Wild Appearance—Thieves' Anecdotes — Learning to Swim — Nearly Drowned by a *Friend*—Sent back to my old Regiment—March during Rainy Season—Join the 35th N.I.—The Regimental Bard —The Doog Dooggee Walla.

I ARRIVED at Loodceanah in the early part of December, 1823, and finding the two battalions of my regiment, the 1st and 2nd of the 17th, together, I became acquainted with the whole body of officers.

I was very kindly received, and two of my brother officers, with considerate kindness, invited me to live with them until I could provide myself with quarters; their generous and warm-hearted hospitality made a great impression on me, not the less deep because it was the custom of the country.

Those who can look back as far as 1814 will remember that the state of society in England in those days was widely different from what it is now. Hard drinking was then so much the fashion that it was regarded as a sign of manhood to indulge

in it. Foul language, gambling, and duelling were considered as the accomplishments of a gentleman. When such was the opinion of society in England, no one will be astonished that the same fashion was followed in India, and that a good deal of it survived in 1824, at the period of which I write. I know not what might have been the excuses by which such a state of things was palliated in England, but at all events in India the young officers could plead as an excuse for their indulgence in gambling the dull monotony of Indian camp life, cut off as they were from England by such an interval of time and space; and as for drinking, the famous Irish excuse, "plenty to drink and *always a-dry*," was considered satisfactory. There was little or no female society to act as a check on evil propensities, to soften and improve the manners, and to elevate their moral tone by the sweet influence for good that every right-minded woman possesses and exercises on those around her. There were but two ladies in Loodecanah, and from various causes they did not exercise much influence on the society in the midst of which they were placed.

A circumstance very unfavourable to the state of society in India was that, before that country was blessed by the glorious discovery of the overland route, we had no books, and consequently no book clubs, no English papers or overland

mails—nothing to amuse or instruct. All the more gentle influences, too, which frequent intercourse with home were calculated to exercise, were rarely felt by those whose destiny it was to spend the best years of their lives in that distant dependency. A reply to a letter written home was never received within eleven months of the date on which it was written. Is it to be wondered at, then, that without female society, without the aid of books or literature of any kind, men should have resorted to drinking, gambling, and several more debasing vices, as antidotes to the wearying dulness and monotony of Indian cantonment life?

Amongst the officers of the regiment were many who were perfect gentlemen, both in mind and manners. The society of such men was at all times agreeable, and their conduct offered an excellent example to a youngster like myself. There were, unfortunately, also some of the old stamp, to whom drinking was second nature, and gambling a necessary excitement. One of these, the best of the lot, for he was neither quarrelsome nor a duellist, came over to my house one morning and asked for a drop of brandy, as he "felt unwell." Very innocently I opened a fresh bottle and put it before him, not anticipating, in my total ignorance of what Indian hard drinking was, that he would finish it before rising from his

chair. A slight sketch of the career of this officer may not be uninteresting, and I am sure his miserable end ought to be a useful warning to any young man who may chance to read this work.

Captain —— entered the East India Company's service at the age of seventeen; he was a fine, tall, handsome youth, with a cheerful, lively temperament, a kind heart, and an amiable disposition. His society was much sought after, and he was invited everywhere, for he could sing a good song, and had a joke for every one. Of course he was greatly flattered at being so much noticed, and at a time when excessive drinking was considered a mark of sociability, he drank as hard as any to merit the reputation of a good fellow. His genial and generous disposition led him to give parties in return, and once launched into this career of extravagance and pleasure, he quickly became involved in a labyrinth of debt, from which he found it impossible to extricate himself. In such circumstances the downward road is too often found to be the easiest. From bad he got to worse, lost all self-respect, drank to drown care, and rapidly became a regular toper. When I joined the regiment he was a gaunt, care-worn man, a very wreck of his former self. All the original brightness of his nature was not, however, as yet wholly tarnished. Some acts of great self-

denying kindness on his part, in which my chum was concerned, fell under my observation, and showed me that the accounts I had received of what he had been were perfectly true.

In October, 1824, or about that time, the regiments in our army were divided, and each battalion was made into a separate regiment. Captain ——, myself, and several others were by this arrangement posted to the 1st battalion, which became the 34th. We marched with the regiment *en route* for Seetapoor on the 20th December, 1824.

After we had been at Sectapoor a short time, a wing of the regiment was ordered out into the district to attack some villages that had rebelled against the King of Oude. Captain —— was with his company escorting the guns on the day the troops arrived near the principal village, or rather town, which was strongly walled and fortified. The commanding officer went forward to reconnoitre, and, after a pause, sent orders to Captain —— to advance with the guns. Instead of exhibiting that prompt and willing obedience which in all ranks is the greatest military virtue, he sat down and cried; his animal courage was gone, drink had destroyed his nerve, and so debasing is the influence of habitual intoxication that all sense of shame even had departed also.

So disgraceful an exhibition of incapacity could not be passed over; he was obliged to leave the regiment, and through the interest of friends was placed on the invalid establishment and went to Futtygurh. At this station some charitable person gave him the superintendence of an indigo factory, on a salary of 300 rupees per month. With this sum, in addition to his invalid pay, he was better off, as regarded pecuniary means, than he was before, and if he had only been able to exercise proper self-restraint, he had every prospect of rapidly reinstating himself in the good opinion of his friends, and of securing a fair position in the world. For three months he went on pretty well, and it was hoped that with perseverance he might yet conquer the enemy that had wrought his ruin. But alas! he again succumbed to the temptation held forth by the demon of drink, and became an habitual hopeless drunkard. The consequence was that he was deprived of a charge which he was no longer capable of administrating. He then pitched his tent in a grove of trees at Futtygurh, where he lived upon the small portion of his pay unappropriated by his creditors. He had an old and attached servant, who stuck to him in his downfall and disgrace. When Captain ——'s pay became due the old man received it, paid all his master's small expenses, and with a portion of the balance bought

some good country arrack, which was half the price of brandy. This he used to serve out to his master in certain proportions, but the unfortunate man would drink his two days' allowance at once, get drunk, go into his tent, lie down and sleep it off; and then coming out, would take a turn in the grove whilst his man tidied his apartment and prepared some food for him.

One day having got a little extra grog, he soon became drunk as usual, and went into his tent, which was carefully closed. As he did not appear again after the lapse of thirty-six hours some wonder was excited, but no notice was taken of his absence; when, however, forty-three hours had elapsed, his servant went in to rouse him, and found his unhappy master not only dead and cold but covered with thousands of ants, which were literally eating him up. As the man described it to me, it was a most horrible sight. A melancholy end to the career of one who had begun life with such promising prospects, all wrecked through his addiction to that degrading vice which, although then more prevalent than it is at the present day, still, alas! is able to show too many victims whose sad fate should operate as a warning to all young officers.

One of the first duties I had to perform at Seetapoor was to go to Lucknow in command of my company, to bring over some 60,000 rupees

for the pay of the regiment. It was unusual to send so young an officer, but as a senior could not be spared at the moment, the colonel gave me his instructions, and with reiterated cautions sent me off to perform this duty.

The celebrated Mordaunt Ricketts was then resident at the court of Lucknow, and, as I was detained in that city two days, he most kindly invited me to partake of his hospitality, and gave me every facility for seeing such objects of interest as were within the compass of my short visit. When I had accomplished the object of my journey, and obtained the money, I set off on my return to Seetapoor.

The treasure, which was carried by twenty men, was secured in stout bags, one at each end of a pole (a baughy). We had to go through several heavy grass jungles, where a man with his load might suddenly squat like a hare and be lost sight of, or where hundreds of Dacoits (robbers) might be lying in wait within a few yards of our line of march; but, with a little precaution, we got the treasure safely through. At the end of two days' march I had to encamp in the dangerous vicinity of a station of the King of Oude's troops, against whom I had been particularly warned. It was my first command. I had never before been with a treasure-party, therefore I had no experience, and I was not

nineteen. I knew that if I acquitted myself properly the colonel would be pleased, and would give me charge of the company, if it should become vacant. I had every inducement to exertion, and I determined I would not lose the treasure through negligence. After some trouble I found a place to encamp in, that the old native officer with me said would do admirably. It was a little grove of young mangoe trees, surrounded by a hard earthen wall and a ditch. It was at the edge of the road. All round was clear, excepting that on the opposite side of the road, a little back from it, there was a very large grove of old gigantic mangoe trees. The branches of these trees came low down, but we could, in many places, just catch the line of light on the further side, so that if any fellows assembled there at night, we should, in all probability, be able to see them against the light. I had the treasure all heaped together and the poles tied, and I then put my own light travelling bed over it. The men slept accoutred, with their loaded muskets by their sides, and we had four sentries on the side next the grove. Towards two o'clock in the morning the old subadar woke me up, and the first words with which he saluted me were, "Sir, we can see a good many men in the grove of trees." Up I jumped immediately, saying, "Turn out the men quietly." The

old fellow was right: there were a lot of men in the grove. After taking a look, I went round to the sentries at the flanks, returned to the front and found the native officer there with three or four files of men; the rest were drawn up near the treasure. I made one of the sentries challenge three times, and then fire, and half-a-dozen men fired at the same time. The discharge of fire-arms was at once followed by a yell and a rush of feet, and at least a hundred and fifty men ran off out of the grove, with all the rapidity with which fear could inspire them. The old native officer said they would have made a rush at us at daybreak, when all their number were collected. Three years before, an officer with a treasure-party had been attacked at this village, and had lost his treasure. I was subsequently robbed at this very place, when out on a shooting excursion, though I had taken the precaution to hire a body of chokeydars from the village. The thieves only got my medicine-chest, and I hope they tasted the tartar emetic.

Seetapoor was a dull out-of-the-way station, apparently beyond the range of inspecting-generals; but our colonel was always prepared for a visit from one, and he took care that his captains and subs should be prepared also. In the hot weather, three times during the week, he made the subaltern officers of the day take command of the

regiment at a morning parade, and put it through half-a-dozen manœuvres—we might choose our own, and do more than the half dozen if we pleased, but less than that number he would not have; and either he or the adjutant was always at hand to see that we made no blunders, and to correct them if we made any. As I always studied my manœuvres well beforehand, I soon learned, under this system, to handle the regiment in an effective and satisfactory manner.

To break the dull monotony of our life in the station, and employ my time profitably, I engaged a moonshee (teacher), and began to study Hindostanee earnestly. I was fortunate in meeting with a man who was not only an excellent scholar, but a most perfect little gentleman—modest and unassuming, without a particle of obsequiousness. Under his auspices I soon acquired some knowledge of the language, and his society made the time pass agreeably; while every now and then some little incident would arise to excite our interest and furnish us with subjects for conversation.

A book on India, written by one who has been there, must, of necessity, contain at least one story of a tiger, and if it had no such exciting narrative to whet the appetite of its readers, people would question the authenticity of the author's facts, and doubt whether he had ever

really visited that "land of the sun," excepting in imagination. I congratulate myself, therefore, in having an authentic tiger story of my own, sensational enough, I hope, to impress my narrative of Indian life with the seal of truth.

From the cantonment at Seetapoor to the town of Khyrabad, distant four miles, runs a straight broad road, through a country as flat and open as it is possible for it to be. Midway between the cantonment and Khyrabad was a fakeer's hut, close to which was a well and a small hollow, only a few yards across, filled with long grass. One morning, at the commencement of the hot weather, just as we were leaving the parade-ground, a man came rushing up breathless, looking as scared as if his life were in danger.

"Sahib log, sahib log" (gentlemen, gentlemen), he exclaimed in accents of terror, "get your guns—there is a tiger in the hollow by the fakeer's hut, and no one dare go by!"

This was an intimation not to be slighted, so in all haste we got our guns and a couple of elephants, and hurried to the spot, where, in truth, a terrible scene presented itself. The tiger, bleeding from a cut in the head, was on the edge of the hollow, growling fiercely, with a man mangled, and apparently dead, lying beneath his paws.

The unfortunate man was the fakeer's son, a

sepoy in one of the King of Oude's regiments, a fine swordsman and first-rate wrestler, one of the champions of his regiment, and had only come home that morning. Some people going to draw water at the well had disturbed the tiger, and on his rising up they had fled terrified. The brave but rash sepoy, who happened to be near at the moment, on learning the cause of the commotion and alarm, immediately advanced to attack the tiger, and with his sword gave him a tremendous cut over the head, which, however, did not materially injure the powerful brute. The tiger rushed at the man, sprung over his shield, caught him at the shoulder, stripped the arm down to the elbow, and dashing him to the ground, kept him down beneath his paws.

When we came up we were at first at a loss how to act, for the man was quite as much exposed to our fire as the tiger. However, it was not a time for lengthened consideration—we fired, and a lucky shot finished the animal. The man was at once put on a charpoy (light bed), and taken to our hospital, whence he was discharged cured in seven weeks; but he lost the use of his arm. As there was no tiger-jungle within thirty miles of the spot, it is curious where the animal could have come from, for tigers are not usually—indeed, very rarely—seen wandering in this way from their haunts. What

could have driven this one to do so not one of the natives could imagine. No man in the country had ever heard of a tiger being seen in those parts. There was not a bush or patch of grass within miles, except this hollow, large enough to shelter one. He would have become a man-eater had he not been destroyed.

We had not been at Seetapoor many days before we found out that the place was celebrated for its thieves. I had my old chokeydar Bhowanny with me, but as the hot weather came on, and we wished to have all our doors and windows open at night, we determined to hire one of the local "Charlies." So Bhowanny got the order, and he soon provided us with a chokeydar, and bearing in mind the old proverb, "Set a thief to catch a thief," we should have been difficult to please, if he had not been to our complete, our entire satisfaction. He was the head of all the thieves in the place, and a more wild, desperate-looking, picturesque, and civil-spoken blackguard I never met with. The name of this convenient and useful gentleman was Tokee.

Outside our bungalow, joining the verandah, was a terraced platform, where in the hot weather, every night after dinner, we used to send our beds, a bit of carpet, a small low table, coffee, and cigars, and there we used to smoke

and chat, and sip our coffee, enjoying the cool air, until our growing somnolence intimated to us that it was time to go to bed. Tokee would go his rounds to see that all was safe, as soon as he knew we were outside, and when he got acquainted with us, if we were inclined to talk, he would stand at the foot of the platform and tell us tales of the lawless but daring feats performed by himself and his comrades.

The man was a perfect picture. His long sinewy arms and broad muscular chest were bare; a turban of rope-like rolls of coarse scarlet muslin, that would stand a sword-cut, covered his head and ears; his long elf locks, matted together, hung down as low as his shoulders; his features were sharp and fine; his beard short and pointed; and his eyes, black and piercing, glittered with excitement, as, standing in the light of the full moon, and leaning on a six-foot bow, with half-a-dozen ugly-looking arrows in his *right* hand, he recounted his adventures, sometimes tragical, but mostly ludicrous.

Tokee was a capital fellow. Honest according to his own ideas, he served us heartily and well for the small pittance of pay which in that distant land is considered sufficient—ten shillings the month. Our doors were open all night; he went in and out as he pleased, and we never lost a thread. Old Bhowanny had a fine time of it,

sleeping all night, and going his rounds only once or so. Tokee, like all my servants, treated him with the greatest respect, always addressing him as Maharaj, great Prince or Rajah.

One night we were disturbed by hearing in our vicinity strange howling sounds, to which Tokee, to whom they appeared intelligible, replied by others equally queer, and the usual warning-cry, "Khubburdar" (take care). When he came round, we, of course, asked him for an explanation of the strange parley he had just held with persons whom we presumed to be his friends.

"Tokee, what were those noises?" we demanded.

"Nothing, sahib, only my friends," was his cool answer.

"Thieves, you mean?"

"Yes, sahib."

"Well, why do they make those noises? Are they coming here?"

"Oh, no; they are only robbing the doctor."

"Robbing the doctor?"

"Yes, sahib; he would not take a chokeydar —so, of course, he has been robbed."

The doctor, we knew, had nothing valuable in his house but his "big fiddle" and a few silver spoons; and as he had been duly warned against the thieves, we did not sympathize with him.

Tokee, I should say, now in honest employ, had no longer—at least while he remained in our service—any connexion with his former friends, and was in no way concerned in their present operations.

About three weeks after this, the thieves tried to rob our senior captain, and wounded him severely. Captain M—— had a quantity of plate, which he kept in a chest in his bed-room. He did not like to sleep outside as we did, and the weather was so hot that to shut the doors would be suffocation; while to have them open would invite the thieves. So he had trellis-work of bamboo fitted into all the outer doors, and made so as to be removable at pleasure. By this simple precaution every one was kept out, and the air was permitted to circulate freely. The captain had only a night-guard of a corporal and four, and would not hire a chokeydar. The consequence was that one night he was roused by a noise, and sitting up in bed he saw a man trying to cut a hole through the trellis-work at his bed-room door. Slipping quietly out of bed, and taking his sword with him, he went first and turned up the guard, bidding them follow him; he then went round the corner of the verandah, made a rush at the thieves, hit one of them a tremendous blow on the head and felled him to the ground, and if the guard had

been with him at the moment, the thief would have been captured. But the captain had been too impatient, and the guard had not come up. The fellow who was felled, having over his head a black blanket, folded fourfold in a peculiar way, the blow of the sword was rendered very ineffectual, and he was scarcely at all injured. In the meantime, no assistance being at hand, one of the thieves cut the captain below the left eye; another struck him over the arm with some blunt instrument, and the whole of them escaped. Had Captain M—— waited patiently until the fellow had cut through the trellis-work, he might easily have caught him by the hair the moment he had his head inside the hole.

Several incidents occurred during my voyage up the Ganges, which convinced me that it was my duty to learn to swim, and I was determined to do so. An excellent place for carrying my purpose into execution was fortunately at hand. The nullah (small river) that bounded the cantonment ran below our garden, and as the stream was deep and clear, and some forty yards wide, we had the bank cleared of all the reeds, the weeds taken out of the bed of the river, and a nice bathing-place made. We had a canoe which was made, like Robinson Crusoe's, out of a single tree, and this I anchored in mid stream as a sort of resting-place. I could very soon swim a few strokes, and

after a little practice, could cross the nullah and return, resting myself by clinging to the side of the canoe. One day a Captain A——, a good swimmer, came to bathe. Not being over-burthened with good sense, he was rather given to the foolish practice of playing practical jokes. Accordingly, when he saw me clinging to the side of the canoe, he deliberately upset it over me, and left me to get out of the water as well as I could. He, swimming ashore, began at once to dress himself, whilst I was instantly drawn by the force of the current under the canoe. At first, I was alarmed at finding myself in such a predicament, for I could not get out, and I had no idea of diving. It flashed through my mind not to struggle, but let myself sink. This I did, and the moment I felt I was clear of the canoe, I struck out and came to the surface. But in consequence of the time I had remained under water, my breath was gone; and, on opening my mouth in my confusion, I took in a great gulp of water, and down I went again. Then I struck out wildly and came up once more, but only to take in more water. I was now fast losing my senses; but fortunately, just as I made another wild stroke my hand touched a reed, which I instantly grasped with all the firmness I could exert, for in another second I should have been gone. It was one single reed that had acciden-

tally escaped being cut away with the others. I drew myself with difficulty to shore, being only so far in possession of my senses to know that Captain A—— was shrieking with laughter. I fell on the bank, the water pouring from my mouth and nostrils; on perceiving which Captain A—— saw he had gone too far, and coming at once to my assistance, he rubbed me well with his hands, covered me up, and then helped me up to the house. I got a glass of hot brandy and water, and by the evening was none the worse. It was a narrow escape. I should have suffered very little more had I been drowned, for I was all but insensible when I touched the reed.

The seasons were ushered in by a tremendous burst of rain. The narrow tortuous river rose rapidly, and flooded the contonments. All night long, such was the destructive power of the stream, that garden-walls and out-offices were falling in, and at daybreak my chum and myself were obliged to quit our bungalow, it being completely surrounded by water, and the river was still rising. Fortunately the rain soon ceased, and the flood subsided as rapidly as it rose. The number of snakes, centipedes, and black scorpions destroyed by it was something wonderful. We killed scores lying benumbed on the ground where they were left by the water.

In July, 1825, myself and four other officers

were re-transferred to our old regiment, the 35th, in consequence of a death having occurred in England, just before the original separation of the battalion took place; and thus I was promoted to the rank of lieutenant, my commission dating from the 1st May, 1824.

Starting at once to join our old comrades, we marched towards Futtygurh, and a more miserable, uncomfortable march I never made, in our own provinces at least. It rained in torrents every day for the first four days, and the whole country was flooded. We had to carry our tents and baggage in country carts, which sunk deep into the clay roads, where they stuck and broke down. We hired black buffaloes, and the moment they got at all tired or hot, down they went into the first pool they met in the road. Our tents were dripping wet, and on two occasions we had to pitch them in water two inches deep, the rain came down so hard, and in such continued streams, that our cloaks could not keep it out; we were thoroughly wet through, and it was hours before we could get dry clothes. The way we managed about our tents was this:—We put on all hands to get up the flies (roofs), and as soon as the outer walls were laced on, we scraped up the mud into a wall six inches high all round the inside, and baled out the water; then we scraped off the moist surface of the earth inside, added

it to the wall to thicken it, and spread our carpets. I should mention that in India our tents are double, one tent inside the other, with a distance of three to four feet between the roofs and the walls, one pole supporting both roofs: a square or single poled tent never leaks like the "rubbishing" English tents.

On reaching Futtygurh the rain ceased and we got on to a sandy soil, where we provided ourselves with camels. We had now a very pleasant march to Meerut, where our corps was stationed. On our arrival, we were kindly welcomed by our comrades, who took us into their houses until we could look round and provide ourselves.

Almost immediately after our arrival we heard that a force was to be sent against Bhurtpoor as soon as the cold weather set in—a very pleasant piece of news for us all, for soldiers like active service and the prospect of prize-money.

My first parade with the 35th introduced me to a grand regimental institution, the same as that which existed in those days in several other native regiments that had served under Lord Lake, and had acquired some celebrity. This was a bhat, or, in plain English, a bard, whose business it was to encourage the men in action, to incite them to deeds of valour, to celebrate their achievements, and to sing their praises. Our bard was a splendid old fellow, who had been

many years in the regiment, and must have known personally all Lord Lake's old soldiers, some of whom were still alive in the regiment when I joined it. The old man was a fine, noble-looking fellow, six feet high, and straight and upright as an arrow; he had a splendid head, with a grand patriarchal grey beard hanging nearly to his girdle. Every day, when parade was dismissed, he used to advance a few paces clear of the regiment, and placing the butt of his spear on the ground, would raise his right hand, and roll out in the most magnificent voice, deep and sonorous, the praises of the colonel, the officers and native officers, and the Noke ka pultun[1] generally. On this, our first parade, he introduced the names of the officers just arrived, and as I was amongst them, I gratified the old fellow with a small present, in return for which he prophesied that I should ever be fortunate and victorious.

Another official I may mention, not peculiar to this, but common to all regiments in India, was the Doog doogge walla, a man with a small drum, flat, and about the size of a breakfast plate, and three inches deep. On the

[1] The words Noke ka pultun, I should explain, mean Noke's regiment, it being the custom in those days to call the regiments (pultuns) by the names of the officers who raised them.

march of the regiment this man accompanies the camp colourmen, who precede the regiment, to mark out the ground for the new camp. As soon as the ground for the camp is fixed upon, the Doog doogge walla goes up the road a little distance towards the old camp, and by the side of the road he plants a little flag, after which he spreads a cloth, upon which he takes his seat, and putting his drum before him, begins to beat to announce to all the camp-followers, the regiment, and the various guards, that camp is close at hand; and I can assure my readers that after a long, hot, and dusty march, the sound of this little drum is very pleasant to the ear, and draws many a copper from the weary and footsore. When our destination is reached, the officers give the man a present, according to the length of the march, whether thirty days or three months.

CHAPTER III.

Rajah of Bhurtpoor dies—His Heir succeeds—Dethroned by his Uncle—Sir D. Ochterlony assembles a Force to replace him — Countermanded — Force eventually sent against Bhurtpoor—Siege commenced—First Appearance under Fire —"Come on, Boys"—General Nichols and his "Unfeeling" Parties—The Futteh Boorj—Heavy Fire—Working Parties —Trench Duty— Breakfast— "Comfortable Dogs" — A Smash of Teapots and Crockery— A Man-hunt — Tally-ho — A Desertion—Alarm in the Fort—Brilliant Sight—The Storm—Immense Guns at Weer.

WHEN the old Rajah of Bhurtpoor died, in 1823, without issue, the succession was claimed by his brother Buldeo Sing, who took possession, and by Doorjun Sal (or Saul), son of a younger brother, who claimed as having been adopted by the deceased rajah. Buldeo Sing was recognised by our Government, and received investiture; but there was some hesitation about acknowledging his heir, Bulwunt Sing, a minor. The governor-general's agent, however, Sir David Ochterlony, one of the greatest men of the age, deeming himself authorised by some general expressions—I quote from Alison—in the governor-general's despatches, gave investiture to the heir on the 26th February, 1825, and soon after his father (Buldeo Sing) died.

Upon this, Doorjun Saul, a bold and turbulent man, collected some troops, and, notwithstanding our recognition of the heir, took Bhurtpoor, killed the young rajah's uncle, who governed for him, and seized the youthful sovereign.

Sir David Ochterlony, seeing the urgency of the case, upon his own authority assembled as large a force as he could, with a powerful train of artillery, and advanced towards Bhurtpoor, in order to vindicate the claim of the prince recognised by our Government.

These proceedings, according to Alison, were strongly disapproved of by the governor-general in council, as tending to induce another war at a time when the resources of the empire were strained to the uttermost to maintain the contest with the Court of Ava; but, according to the general opinion in India, moved by the jealousy with which he regarded the energetic proceedings of Sir David Ochterlony, the superiority of whose mind was generally acknowledged, he gave orders for suspending the march of the troops, and as Doorjun Saul cunningly renounced his intention of usurping the throne, the soldiers were ordered to return to their cantonments.

Sir David Ochterlony had serious doubts of the sincerity of Doorjun Saul's protestations, and feeling that the honour of our Government was implicated in the immediate assertion of its supre-

macy, requested and received leave to resign his appointment. When I arrived at Meerut, the report was generally prevalent that General Reynell had received orders to supersede Sir D. Ochterlony, and to disperse the troops in case Sir David should refuse or delay to obey the order. The old hero, feeling that his advice was slighted, himself doubted, and his usefulness gone, retired to Meerut, and died of a broken heart. His last words, as he turned his face to the wall, were, "I die disgraced."

But he was, ere long, fully avenged; and although we cannot but regret that he did not live to learn the reversal of the verdict which had been so unjustly pronounced against him, it is satisfactory to know that his prudence, energy, foresight, and manly vigorous policy were signally vindicated, while the governor-general and his timid advisers "ate dirt."

No sooner were the troops dispersed than Doorjun Saul, having succeeded in blinding the governor-general's eyes, improved the opportunity of which, by the incapacity and want of judgment of his opponents, he was enabled to avail himself. He levied troops, laid in provisions, manufactured tons of powder and thousands of shot, repaired the ruinous walls of Bhurtpoor, cleared out the ditches, and strengthened all the works of that grand fortress; then he entered

into negotiations with all the independent princes; and entertaining and enrolling all the malcontents and turbulent spirits in the surrounding districts who flocked to his standard, he raised the military ardour of the Jats * by tales of former conquest and hopes of future victory, and prepared to defend desperately the fortress that was considered by the whole of Hindostan as the impregnable bulwark against which the British power was destined to be broken. In war, time is composed of men's lives, and Doorjun Saul had gained all the time he required. The governor-general and council saw, when too late, the folly of which they had been guilty. By their shilly-shally conduct and their delay in adopting active measures, they had given Doorjun Saul time to prepare for resistance. In all haste the young rajah was acknowledged, and a force was appointed of sufficient magnitude, not only to render all opposition useless, but to overawe the native princes, who kept their eyes firmly fixed on all our proceedings, and confidently expected our defeat and downfall.

Not only was their wish the father to the thought, but the heavens themselves gave a sign, which they interpreted in their favour. In the month of October a comet appeared in the sky, portending, according to Hindoo seers, the down-

* A peculiar caste of people who inhabit that country.

fall and extinction of a power, which, of course, must be the British, for what general or what troops could hope to succeed against that fortress before which, at a former period, not very distant, that lion, Lord Lake, and his hitherto victorious troops, had been repulsed? Had not the Jats at Bhurtpoor erected the Futteh Boorg or Bastion of Victory, in which were built up the skulls and bones of the thousands of the dreaded gora log (white men) who had fallen in Lord Lake's vain attempt to storm the bulwark of Hindostan? Was not the great and terrible Lony Ochter (Ochterlony), in whom they had the discernment to see their most formidable enemy, dead? Were not their works higher and stronger than they had ever been before, and was not the Motee Jheel (lake), from the abundant rains sent by the Gods, full of water, which, when they had let it into the ditch, who would dare to attack them with any hope of success?

The troops destined to form the army for the siege of Bhurtpoor, commenced their march early in October, 1825. As my regiment approached Agra, escorting the guns from Meerut, we heard, as we passed through the various villages, the confident predictions muttered by the natives as to the fate that awaited us. "Ah, go to Bhurtpoor, you won't come back!" said some, their wish, no doubt, father to the

thought; and one old wrinkled hag, rushing out of her house and raising her skinny arms in the air, exclaimed, "Go to Bhurtpoor; they'll split you up. Go and be killed, all of you." One of the sepoys, who heard her, rushed out of the ranks, and flourishing his firelock over her head, exclaimed, with equal confidence, "Get in, you old hag; when we come back, we'll make the elephants serve you out. We'll pound you and all your generation into mortar."

The men, fortunately, were not much disturbed either by the omens in the heavens, or by the threats on the earth.

The army assembled in two divisions, one at Muttra, under General Reynell, the other at Agra, under General Nicholls, both places nearly about the same distance from Bhurtpoor. The siege-train and engineers' park assembled at Agra. The train was the largest that had ever been got together by the English in India, consisting of a hundred pieces, siege guns and mortars, a vast amount of engineers' stores, and tools for trenching, sapping, and mining. Not only were bales of cotton provided for sapping, but a large quantity of gabions and fascines were made at Agra and taken along, in case it might be requisite, immediately on arrival, to erect a battery or other work. Everything, in fact, that skill, prudence, and forethought could devise

was prepared on a scale commensurate to the greatness of the stake about to be played for. My regiment was brigaded with the 15th and 21st N. I., and on us devolved the task of escorting the train and engineers' park to Bhurtpoor. On the first march I was on rear-guard, and weary work I found it, the first gun starting at daybreak, and the last not being off the ground until after sunset. The first gun got into camp, some thirteen miles off, long before the last had started from Agra. I did not reach camp myself till four next morning, for what with guns to drag out of hollows, carts to right and reload, stray cattle to catch and re-yoke, and all sorts of work to do with drag-ropes, with spade and pickaxe, our labour in getting some of the engineers' carts along, seemed interminable. Next day, my regiment being in the centre, we all got along much better. We had to furnish guards for all the villages through which the train passed, to see that no fires were lighted or hookahs smoked in any of the houses or streets bordering on those through which the train filed. In small villages of thatched houses every fire was mercilessly extinguished—a precaution fully justified by the fact that we had scores of carts laden with powder. We reached camp at 2 P.M., and the regiment drew up on some ground covered with low bushes

and tufts of grass. Here an amusing incident occurred. Just as the officers were told to fall out, a dog that belonged to a man of my company, a sporting character, started a hare. The owner got so excited by the prospect of a little sport, that, quite forgetting where he was, the rigid discipline of parade, and the awful presence of the colonel-sahib, out he started from the ranks, down went his musket, off went his cap, and away he ran, cheering on the dog, to the great delight of all the regiment, and the amusement of the colonel himself, who, notwithstanding the breach of discipline, could not help laughing. After a short run, the hare, bothered by the camp-followers, got bewildered, and the dog caught it. Ramdeen, whose sudden fit of sporting enthusiasm had now somewhat cooled, came back, looking rather sheepish and askance at the colonel, who had dismissed the regiment. Of course he got a good blowing-up for his escapade, but I believe the kind colonel accepted the hare.

On the third morning we reached Bhurtpoor, where we found the whole force united, and a most imposing appearance the camp presented, with close upon 30,000 men and four times that number of camp-followers. We were encamped at first close to the forest that surrounded the fort, but were obliged next day to shift the position

and move farther back. In the citadel there was a lofty, double-headed bastion, on which was mounted a tremendous long, heavy brass gun, that threw every shot into our camp, and, as men were constantly killed or wounded, it was thought advisable to move out of range. Our operations, commencing in good fortune to ourselves, looked ominous for the usurper and his fortress.

When the advanced guard of the first division neared Bhurtpoor, our spies brought out information that the Jats were in the act of cutting the bund or dam of the Motee Jheel to let the water into the ditch. On learning this, General Reynell instantly sent on a detachment of the lancers, H.M 14th, and Skinner's horse, with the engineers, to prevent the dam being cut, or to stop the gap, if that operation had been already performed. The detachment came on the enemy just in the nick of time, when they were in the very act of cutting the bund, and the water was beginning to run out rapidly. Five minutes later it would have been impossible to stop the gap that had been made; the whole ditch would have flooded, and the difficulties of the task we had to accomplish would have been greatly increased. The lancers and Skinner's horse, however, soon drove off the enemy, who, being taken by surprise, did not offer so obstinate

a resistance as they might otherwise have done. With great exertions, the engineers stopped the gap and kept back the water, but it was a task which required all their skill, and in which, fortunately for us, they succeeded.

Amongst the enemy's horsemen were numbers who were clad in suits of chain-mail, through which our lancers could not drive their lances, but which the bayonets of the 14th went through as if it had been paper, the fine point of the bayonet and the heavy weight of the musket overcoming all the resistance of the finely-tempered armour.

My first duty was in command of a covering party on the left front, near the village of Kuddum Kundee, whilst working-parties were digging the first parallel. The field-officer who posted my company put us, stupidly enough, in an open space on hard, dry ground, without a bush or blade of grass to conceal our position from the enemy; and as it was a clear moonlight night, of course we were distinctly seen from the fort, the colour of the earth being light, and our uniforms dark. I could not understand why we had been stuck down just at that particular point, when, at a few yards' distance, there was a position amply covered by trees and bushes; so looking round and finding a spot where we should be screened from view, I at once marched my company there, posted my sentries, and commu-

nicated with the company on my right, my post being on the extreme left. In about an hour's time an alarm was somehow raised, and we heard the working parties run to their arms, calling out that the enemy was on them. The noise being heard in the fort, the men must have been immediately seen, for a heavy fire was at once opened on Kuddum Kundee. A perfect storm of shot came down, not a few ploughing up the open space where I had been first posted. I congratulated myself on the move I had so opportunely made, and in the morning marched my men back without a single casualty, which certainly would not have been the case if I had remained where I was first posted.

My experience of camp life was delightful. The weather was lovely, and supplies were abundant, for Agra was only thirty-six miles off, and the excitement of the trenches and daily brushes with the enemy were, to my youthful spirit, perfectly charming. The first time I was under fire will ever remain impressed on my memory. I was on inlying picket, and ordered with others on duty to assemble at a certain point. The field-officer of the day came and marched us off towards the forest that lay between our camp and the town. We entered a beautiful glade, fine soft grass under our feet, noble trees of all kinds on each side, and in such varieties and luxuri-

ance as only a tropical country can show. In the distance, and at the end of the glade, rose a round tower, with some other loophooled building, we could not tell what. As we were admiring the romantic spot, the sharp, loud report of a heavy gun not far on our right, followed by a shot crashing through the trees, put an end to our romantic enthusiasm for beautiful scenery, and recalled us to the stern reality of warfare.

One of our field-officers, who had never before seen a shot fired, having through all his career been on a comfortable non-fighting staff appointment, made us laugh heartily at his peculiar conduct on this his maiden field. Jumping off his horse in a desperate hurry, and stooping as he hurried along, he called out, "Come on, boys! don't be afraid;" but seeing us unable to resist our risible propensities he was exceedingly angry, drew himself up with a look of wounded self-importance, and ordered us to come quickly on. What more he might have said I don't know, for at that moment another shot made him bob again and march on in silence.

We turned sharp off into the forest, and found ourselves in the presence of General Nicholls, with a party of cavalry and two horse-artillery guns. In fact, we were a large item in one of the general's feeling, or, as they were termed in camp, "unfeeling" parties, and as we were late,

the general was impatient and irascible. We now formed into line, and advancing through the forest came all at once into the open, and Bhurtpoor burst on our view not three hundred yards off. The scene was beautiful in the extreme. Two lofty massive towers on the left—one that of the celebrated Futteh Boorj (Bastion of Victory), built by the Jats to commemorate Lord Lake's repulse, seemed to form an angle of the fort, at a point from which a succession of equally massive bastions and curtains crossed our front, and continued off to the right, until a projecting bastion meeting a part of the forest cut off all further view.

The embrasures were armed with guns, and on the walls were assembled a great number of the garrison, standing or reclining in every sort of careless attitude. Some were sitting cross-legged, with their matchlocks over their knees; others with their legs dangling over the walls; while many, with their sword and shield in hand, or their matchlock over their shoulders, were standing upon the parapets, apparently talking and chatting at ease, little suspecting that an enemy was so near.

The walls were sharply and clearly defined against the blue and cloudless sky, and the sun at our backs threw into high relief the wild-looking soldiery on the parapets, in their quaint

and picturesque costumes, lighting up the varied colours of their Eastern garb with a flood of glorious sunshine, which made their brightly-polished arms glitter like diamonds.

Several groups of men, whom we observed sitting together, were singing in chorus, beating time with their hands, and here and there along the walls a tall spear, stuck upright, bore a little pennon, the mark probably of some petty chief.

The overhanging boughs of the thick forest trees formed a shade which partially screened our dark uniforms, and for a minute or two we were unobserved. The reconnoissance was nearly completed, when the beauty and interest of the scene were greatly enhanced by the appearance, from between the two bastions on our left, of a clump of horsemen, prancing and caracolling, each with a bright matchlock over his shoulder, or a long spear in his hand.

On they came bounding towards us, till their progress was arrested by our horse artillery, who, quick as thought, unlimbered, and in a few seconds sent a couple of shots right through the capering steeds and horsemen, scattering them right and left, and unhorsing many of the best riders among them.

When the men on the walls saw the flash and heard the sound of our guns, there was, in the first moment of surprise, a tremendous hubbub;

then down came a perfect shower of shot, and grape and matchlock balls. The enemy had evidently laid their guns for the edge of the forest and been practising at it, for almost as quickly as I can write the word, eleven of our men were knocked over, and the whole force was exposed to so sharp a fire that General Nicholls ordered us to disperse and shelter ourselves wherever we could.

At the very moment when this fire opened, I had recognised my old Captain of the 10th N.I., and was shaking hands with him when a shot passed between us and took off the left arm of my orderly, who was standing close to us, and the foot of one of my men, who was immediately behind him. An old Waterloo officer, whose name I forget, said he had never been under so sharp a fire in his life, and I can well believe it, for although we had not been under fire more than two or three minutes, we had a large casualty list.

One of our most agreeable duties was that of being sent as a working party into the forest, felling trees to form an abattis to prevent the enemy's horse from making sorties and annoying our camp. These occasions were regular picnics, each officer taking his own dinner with him, and when all were put together any stranger officer was heartily welcomed to our feast. But the duty we liked

best of all was duty in the trenches. We had several reasons for this preference. One was that our doctor, who was a capital fellow, always organised a grand breakfast for us in the parallel near Baldeo Sing's garden on the right. At 9 o'clock, when all was quiet, we used to leave our native officers in charge of our companies and go to breakfast. Our table was laid at right angles to the trench, not, perhaps, the most prudent position in which we could have placed it, but, from the formation of the trench, just then very convenient. Our kitchen was behind the trunk of a large tree close at hand, and the regimental doolies (litters) were our plates, baskets, and larder. No one sat at the outer end of the table, where our empty plates, teapots, cups, and saucers were put, and fortunate it was that no one selected that position, for one morning a chance shot from the fort struck the top of the parapet, covered us with clouds of earth and dust, knocked off the teapot, smashed the empty crockery, and cleared the end of the table. The cloud of dust, the flying clods, the crash of the broken crockery, the whiz of the shot, made all our servants think that at least half of us were killed, and one of them, the doctor's servant, began to cry and beat his breast, singing in the most doleful tones, "Bap re bap. Bap re bap. Oh dear; oh dear! Mere sahib lōg;

mere sahib lōg. My poor masters—my poor masters!"

Hearing us laugh, however, he started up, looking thoroughly indignant that we could not appreciate his grief; and perhaps he was a little disappointed at having lost an opportunity of displaying his talent. He would have made a capital professional howler at funerals.

One morning, when we were in the midst of our breakfast, laughing and enjoying ourselves, Lord Combermere passed on his way to inspect the works. "What officers are those?" he asked.

"The 35th, my Lord."

"Comfortable dogs, let 'em alone."

When on duty in the trenches, our servants used to come an hour after sunrise with clean clothes and apparatus for washing. I had just changed my shirt one morning and was brushing my hair, when a large shot took the top of the parapet just over my head. I was knocked down by a clod of earth and smothered in dirt and dust; and such was the appearance I presented that the man who picked me up thought I was killed, though fortunately I was only very dirty and a good deal bruised, but not so much so as to spoil my breakfast.

The great attraction, however, of trench duty, to those who were in the secret, was to get to a two-gun battery on the left of the second

parallel. Although it was considered at one time as a post of danger, it was eagerly sought for by those on trench duty; not so much on account of the peril to be encountered in it, as because it was the scene of a good deal of fun. Seventy yards to the left of the battery were some ravines that ran into the ditch of the fort, and between these ravines there were some large tombs, amongst which the enemy's marksmen would creep, and thence commence a sharp fire on us, to which it may be believed we were not slow in replying with our rifles. It was, indeed, a regular duel.

Towards noon the fellows would draw off, with sometimes one or two to carry or help away. In the afternoon another set of men would come up the ravines, and getting amongst the tombs would gradually emerge and wander over the ground picking up bullets. Keeping ourselves quiet, we let them break cover and get well away from the ravines, and then came our time. Off went our coats, and pulling a spear each out of the *chevaux-de-frise* on the left of the trench, we dashed after the bullet-gatherers, generally securing four or five, and bringing them into the battery, where we proceeded to examine them about affairs in Bhurtpoor. Those who would not reply to our questions we tied across a gun, and gave them a dozen with an artilleryman's

belt; those that were stupid we let go with a kick, but minus the bullets, which we kept for ourselves; those that were intelligent, and could give us some information, we forwarded to head quarters, from whence we received commendation for our zeal and vigilance! Thus these scenes among the tombs were not only productive of fun, but occasionally resulted in the acquisition of useful information obtained from the captives of our spears. Time for relieving trenches was at first 4 P.M., but, in consequence of the numerous casualties that occurred by the fire from the fort, it was subsequently changed to dusk. The weather was very dry, and the roads leading to the trenches much cut up by the traffic of carts, guns, and tumbrils, &c., backward and forward, so that when a regiment marched down a great cloud of dust would be raised, at which the gunners in the fort would fire, and as they knew the ground thoroughly, their shots rarely fell wide. My regiment going down one evening lost fifteen soldiers by one shot, which struck the third section of the leading company and went right through five or six, scattering all my men right and left.

I certainly was uncommonly green in those days, and cannot help smiling at the recollection. One night, for example, I was sent down with my company on fatigue duty to carry planks for platforms, gabions, and fascines for the left breaching

battery. As it was a fine moonlight night, we were seen from the fort, and, of course, fire was instantly opened on us. I stood by the spare gabions on the ground, waiting for my men, who were bringing up the heavy planks, when the enemy commenced to fire. I was wondering what mischief made the gabions dance about as they did; and seeing some of the men sheltering themselves in the trench after laying down their loads, I was walking up to see if any one was amongst the gabions, when the motive power was suddenly revealed to my weak mind by a large jinjall ball (jinjall is a wall piece), which, as it went on its errand of destruction, caught the nearest gabion and knocked it over. As two or three more balls came whistling past my ears, I thought it prudent to walk over to the trench, and get sharply under cover, seeing there was no use in getting shot for nothing.

The attack on the fort was made in two places, that on the right at a prominent angle bastion and its adjoining curtain; the left at a projecting bastion, called the long-necked bastion, and the curtain to its left.

The left breaching battery, which was armed with fourteen guns, opened fire, I think, on the 28th December; but after battering the curtain for a week, it was found impracticable to make a breach. The walls being of tough tenacious

clay, which a shot would enter, pounding that particular spot to dust, but leaving the whole surrounding part uninjured as before, a lot of the upper part of the rampart came down, forming a fine slope of dust and clods, ready to deaden the force of any shots fired into it. After the place was taken, I lived for a week in a garden just behind the curtain that had been battered, and saw with my own eyes that there then was no practicable breach. I also remarked that the men who were digging out the shot could with difficulty ascend the battered place, even after much had been dug down. Our tactics, therefore, were changed. The counterscarp was blown in, and the angle bastion, and long-necked bastion, were attacked by mines. Every one who had a rifle was encouraged to get into the sap and the nearest trenches, to help to keep down the fire from the fort, and to prevent any one from spying out our present tactics. We enjoyed this duty very much, for it gave us the opportunity of having the most delightful little picnics in the trenches.

Towards the close of our operations, a poor sergeant of H.M.'s 14th, who had been employed in the engineers' department, got lost one night going home from his work, and being caught by a party of men from the fort, was murdered, the wretches cutting off his head and mangling his body cruelly. The men of the 14th came to

those of H.M.'s 59th in our division, and made them swear to avenge the death of the sergeant, who had been much liked. One of the most distressing incidents of the siege was the desertion to the enemy of Sergeant Herbert, of the Artillery. It was a most unaccountable act. He was a Waterloo man, and had always been a steady, good soldier, who regularly remitted a portion of his pay to his old mother. No conceivable cause could be discovered for the base act of treachery by which this man brought disgrace on himself. He was afterwards seen pointing the guns against us, and it is believed that he gave information to the enemy of our hour of relieving trenches; but his crime did not remain long unpunished, for he was subsequently caught, tried, and hanged. Another most disagreeable occurrence that took place was the following: Shortly after the trenches were opened, a Sepoy of the 15th, badly wounded, was taken to the field hospital, where, as the doctor could not get blood from his arm, as a last resource the temporal artery was opened, but without success, as the man died. His comrades and the men of his caste paraded the body through our brigade, ignorantly exclaiming to the men, "See here, this is the way in which we are cut up in hospital." Very fortunately, no ill effects ensued. The men were generally treated with great good

temper and judgment, and this ominous squall passed over without any evil result.

On the night of the 7th January, just after dusk, a shot from the fort blew up one of our tumbrils proceeding to the trenches with powder. The fire was communicated to one of our magazines, containing 20,000 lbs. of powder, which instantly exploded, and set fire to a quantity of engineers' stores. The awful crash turned us all out, and we went to the front to see what was going on. As our camp was on a rather rising ground, we could just see the line of the walls of Bhurtpoor over the tops of the forest-trees, and when we came to the front we at once perceived a tremendous blaze from the burning stores; and the smoke being blown aside by a gentle breeze, the whole line of fortification was seen brilliantly lighted up with large Bengal lights, evidently prepared against a night attack. At the same time, every gun that would bear on our trenches opened fire, and many that could not, joined the cannonade, just for the sake of the row they made. Every jinjall and matchlock was pointed at us, and a heavy fire was maintained all along the walls. It was a magnificent scene, the red flames of the burning stores lighting up the forest, and the Bengal lights burnt by the enemy making the long line of fortification shine like silver. The broad blaze of the

guns, and the rapid sparkling of musketry, formed a display of fireworks such as I have seldom seen equalled.

Our astonishment was great at the silence of our batteries, which, as we afterwards learned, was purposely maintained, with the view of saving our men. When the enemy got tired with their exertions, our mortar batteries began to speak out, first one shell being seen in the air, then two, and then whole flights bursting in the town with terrible precision. All night this deadly rain of shells continued, with a result which might be conjectured from the numerous conflagrations we witnessed. The fire had burst out in two or three places at once, and in the confusion which this must have occasioned within the walls, two brass 13-inch mortars arrived from Delhi, and opened upon the town. The first shell was aimed at the Rajah's Palace, and fell right into the marble enclosure on the top, where the Rajah was at the time in company with his wives. It went crashing through four thick stone floors, and burst in a room on the ground, to the terrible alarm, as we heard afterwards, of the ladies who witnessed it.

On the 16th, two mines exploded in the long-necked bastion, brought down the thick outer casing of clay, and exposed and partly destroyed the brick core of the bastion on which the guns

had rested. The guns came down with the mass of clay, and in a very short time our artillery demolished and finished the brick core. Next morning we found the breach partially repaired with large logs of wood, trunks of trees, and clay; but before night, these repairs were destroyed by our batteries.

The morning of the 18th January, 1826, was appointed for the storm; we were warned quietly at night, and every precaution was taken to prevent any intelligence of our intention being carried to the enemy.

Before day-break we were all in the trenches, above which the officers received the strictest orders not to allow a head or a bayonet to be seen; and so well were these orders carried out, that the enemy seemed to have no idea that the assault was so imminent. Day dawned, the light appeared, the sun rose, but still no signal was given, and we feared that the explosion of the grand mine under the angle bastion, which was to be the signal for the onset, had failed. Eight o'clock struck, and we were losing all patience, when, with a dull heavy sound, and a shock like an earthquake, up went the mine, throwing high into the air heads, legs, and arms, blocks of timber, and masses of masonry and clay, enveloping all that part of the town and trenches with a thick cloud of smoke and dust.

The leading division of the right forlorn hope,

with Brigadier M'Coombe, were struck down, and Lord Combermere was in great danger; but with a cheer, the two storming parties rushed at the breaches, and both in a few moments were carried. As soon as we heard the cheers of our men, the whole party involuntarily started up, and stood on the banquettes,[1] in spite of the colonel's orders to keep down; and seeing our gallant storming party going up the breach pause to gather breath and rush on again, our men could stand it no longer, but jumping out of the trenches, dashed across the open, regardless of the storm of shot from the fort that swept through our ranks. We were soon in the sap and up the breach, which it was no easy matter to mount, so steep and rough was the ascent, encumbered too with masses of débris of all kinds, and with the bodies of such of our storming party as had been wounded or slain. In two or three minutes we were in the body of the place, going along the streets, silencing the fire that rained on us from the side streets, and storming the houses that were desperately defended. A series of hand-to-hand combats took place. In one place the gallant Jāts made a stand in a narrow street, and many hundreds were killed. We walked over their bodies lying three deep, and, horrible to say, they were all burning. The uniforms they wore

[1] Banquette, step on which a garrison stands to fire.

being of cotton cloth, well padded with cotton wool, and quilted, these, as our men fired close, caught fire and burnt like tinder. Many, too, were set on fire by their own slow matches. Altogether it was a terrible scene.

One of our wounded officers, Captain Fisher, who was seated near a heap of the dead and wounded bodies of the enemy, hearing one of them groaning, got a few men to help him, and had the poor wretch taken out. The man had both his thighs broken, while his coat was burning, and literally roasting him. Captain F. got a water-carrier to extinguish the fire, and had him laid out straight; but as he was turning away, the wretch, fired by fanatical vengeance, made a cut at him with his sword, which luckily fell short, and one of the Sepoys immediately blew his brains out.

We were posted all round the ramparts, and in each bastion and at every gateway; commanding positions in the town were seized, and we were cautioned to be vigilant, as the enemy was in full force in the citadel, which was the strongest part of the fortress. Most of the large brick houses in the town were still occupied by the enemy; and as numbers of our men were picked off from those contiguous to the ramparts, I had three guns in my bastion dragged forward to its gorge and loaded. I then sent a strong party to search the houses, and to disarm the people, which was soon done.

The citadel surrendered in the afternoon, and Doorjun Saul was captured by the cavalry under General Sleigh, after an exciting chase of several miles, and sent into camp as a prisoner.

Our brigade went round the district, and found the strong fort of Biana abandoned, as well as those of Weer and Combheer. On the walls of the fort at Weer we found some enormous iron guns, built up something in the style of our present Armstrongs, but with this difference, that over the inner core of longitudinal bars, forming the bore, iron hoops, not coils, were shrunk on, over which came a layer of longitudinal bars, welded on parallel to the bore, and outside these another layer of hoops shrunk on. The diameter of these guns at the muzzle was enormous—something like three feet, and the bore was small. I should suppose they were about 40-pounders. I don't think any amount of powder would have burst them. It is a marvel how they could have been forged. I never saw a native anvil anything like so large as our common blacksmith's anvil. These guns are a curious instance of the large works successfully carried out by the natives of India with the rudest and simplest of means.

After taking possession of all the forts in the Bhurtpoor territory, and finding that all the people were peacefully disposed, the brigade was broken up, and my regiment was ordered to return to Meerut.

CHAPTER IV.

New System of Drill introduced—All Hail, Sir Henry (Torrens)—Baron Osten—Escort Lord Combermere—Fair at Thaneysir—Officers—Competition Wallahs—March for Barrackpoor—Half-batta Order—Dismay and Mischief it created—Lord W. Bentinck and Commanding Officers of Regiments—Hated by every one—Parades—Colonel ——'s Dinner-party — The 'Bus and the Brigadier—Marriage —Regiment leaves for Jumualpoor — A Village depopulated by Cholera—Horrible Sight — Reach Jumualpoor — Turn Carpenter, &c., and build a House — Hog Hunting—Anecdotes—Misfortune—Sorrow—Return Home.

IN the cold weather of 1826 and 1827, the new system of drill, by Sir H. Torrens, was introduced into the Indian army, and the General of our division, Sir T. Reynell, through whose interest we were sent back to Meerut, gave us six weeks in which to get it up and practise it. previous to our annual inspection. What a business it was! On parade at gun-fire, drill for two hours; on parade at 1 p.m., drill for one hour; on parade in the evening, drill till dark, and all other duties besides. A very clever skit on the subject appeared in J. Silk Buckingham's paper, "The Journal." I remember a few lines

which amused everybody at the time, and may amuse some still:—

"A DAY IN CANTONMENTS.

Light in the east, top-dugga[1] on the ear,
And hark, the bugle's summons shrill and clear,
Enter 'Ram-Churrun,'[2] messenger of woe,
Tap-dugga, sahib, answer, Nikkul jow,[3]
Bugle bujata,[4] Hum ne soona nay,[5]
Hum soona, sahib,[6] Nikkul jow,[7] I say,
Alas! Ram-Churrun, patient, mild Hindoo,
Reckless of angry threats and glances blue,
Still persevering, at a prudent distance,
Urges the fruitlessness of all resistance—
Urges, and would have failed at last,
But that a second loud, unwelcome blast,
Floats on the breeze and proves beyond a doubt
That, *nolens, volens*, Master must turn out.
Slowly he rises, with Ram-Churrun's aid
Habilitates, and canters to parade;
Gropes in the thick dull mist, and having found
His regiment, falls in and marches round.
All hail, Sir Harry! but for thy improvements,
Still should we study antiquated movements,
Still plodding on the old dull trackless way,
Hack at Dundas but every other day,
And revel in a nap, unhallowed leaven,
Of sleep, four mornings out of seven.
Now, barring Sundays, every burra bhore,[8]
Views us unlearning what we learnt before,
Three's to the right—Toom kuhan jaté ho?[9]
Three's to the left—You pangul ither ao."[10]

[1] Gun-fire. [2] The unfortunate sub's. unfortunate valet.
[3] Get out. [4] The bugle sounds. [5] I didn't hear it.
[6] I heard it, sir. [7] Get out. [8] Early dawn.
[9] Where are you going to? [10] Come this way, fool.

Of the remainder of the ballad there are but fragmentary remains in my mind. I will only say that our inspection went off with considerable éclat, and the general gave us great praise for our exertions, and I believe it was really well earned. We were at Meerut for three years, and, in spite of abundance of drill and field-days, three very pleasant years they were. My ram-churrun really had a difficulty at times in waking me up; but then we had to be aroused at half-past 2 A.M. to go to parade, and then to march with the regiment over three miles to the brigade-ground, in order that we might be there at daybreak. I was not half knowing enough in those days, or would have arranged to have a good cup of hot coffee brought to me before I started. We did not, on the whole, dislike field-days when we got on the ground, but it was the rousing up and turning out in the bitter cold mornings which was the difficulty, and, to confess the truth, few of us found it agreeable. Yet at Bhurtpoor no one had any difficulty about it—a word, and we were up. Human nature is, I fear, naturally inclined to be slothful, and boys are not exempt from human weakness.

It was whilst we were at Meerut that that wonderful adventure befell Captain Baron Osten, of the 16th Lancers. It is well known among military men, and an account of it has already ap-

peared in another form, but it will bear repeating. The Baron was out with a party lion-shooting, when he found himself in a proximity to one of these noble animals more exciting than agreeable. The king of the forest was just below his elephant, and, as I have heard, was going to spring, when the Baron leant over the front of the howdah to fire at the beast. At that moment the front gave way, and he was precipitated right on to the lion, which immediately put his paw on him as a dog does to a rat. The driver, however, with great presence of mind, made the docile elephant bend a young tree down over the lion's loins in such a manner as to cause him great pain, and turn his attention from the Baron, who immediately crawled away, while his party, coming opportunely up, shot the animal which had so nearly made short work with him.

Whilst at Meerut, I was sent on escort duty with Lord Combermere. We escorted his lordship to the foot of the hills, and on returning encamped at Thaneysir, where, at a holy tank of vast extent, the work of a Hindoo prince in former days, a grand fair is held at the vernal equinox. Although called a tank, it is really a small lake between brick walls. It is so many years since I visited the spot that I hesitate to give any estimate of its dimensions. I remember, however, that it was only half filled with water, that there

were two bridges over it, and that its brick walls were in a ruinous state.

There happened at that time to be an eclipse of the sun, and a vast multitude stood on the steps ready to rush into the water at the moment the Brahmins announced the commencement of the wonderful phenomenon. The people were eager and impatient, and, when the signal was given, the rush into the water was terrific. The shouts, the cries, and clamour of the multitude stifled the screams of crushed and drowning women, and, although there were numerous casualties, the people believed that the sufferers who perished in the holy tank, at such a propitious moment, were rather objects of envy than of regret or sorrow, inasmuch as it was the general opinion that they had gone straight from earth to heaven.

Whilst at Seetapoor with the 34th N.I., I had taken a moonshee, and had studied assiduously the native language. Had I remained in that regiment, I should have had a good chance of obtaining the interpretership, as there was above me only one passed man; that is to say, only one officer who had been examined by a committee at the college, and pronounced fit to perform the duties of an interpreter. But when I was transferred to the 35th N.I. I found three passed men above me, and, as I had no interest, I gave up the study, for, in those days, appointments were rarely procured except by

those who enjoyed the patronage of influential men. I found that to pay a moonshee (native teacher) every month and buy books, without any hope of return for my expenditure, was a serious loss; at least, so I thought it at the time, but I never made a greater mistake in my life. Had I continued my studies and made myself a thorough master of the language, so as to read and write it with fluency, an ample return would eventually have been made for all my trouble and expenditure; but with the ignorance and self-confidence of a youth who had seen nothing of the world, I judged otherwise, and I have never ceased to lament it. In those days, books of any kind were very dear, and it was often difficult to obtain them. We had no book-clubs, and as we were not ourselves disposed to take much trouble in procuring a supply of literature of any sort, the result was that our time was wasted in idle pursuits. I do not, however, consider shooting and hunting as waste of time, but, on the contrary, beneficial to the soldier, inasmuch as such active and manly pursuits prepare men for service in the field. The men wanted to fill commissions in the army are not bookworms, whose strength lies only in their brains, but men with good constitutions, hardy and bold, with a fine hand and a good seat on horseback; a quick eye for the country, fertile

in expedients, and well endowed with sound common sense. I would back such a man to conduct an expedition, settle and govern any country better than ninety-nine out of the hundred of "competition wallahs."

I would give officers every opportunity of engaging in the sports of the country, consistent with the efficient performance of the duties of their regiments, and would even encourage them to attain excellence in such pursuits. I would induce them to make themselves acquainted with the surrounding districts, especially the frontier and the countries beyond the boundary-line; to make friends and sporting acquaintances amongst the tribes that are our neighbours, for, depend upon it, the knowledge thus gained in times of peace would be a wonderful aid towards success when engaged in war. We have as yet but a very superficial knowledge of many parts of our own provinces—the woods, rivers, jheels, jungles, villages, inhabitants, and resources, and the deficiency in our maps is discreditable to our Government. If we know so little even of the territories which own our sway, what must be the state of our knowledge of neighbouring provinces? Keep competition wallahs for secretariats and all penwork, there they will be admirable, but officer your regiments with the men I have described—men of action.

My regiment marched from Meerut on the 30th October, 1823, *en route* for Barrackpoor. In the beginning of December we heard the direful news that the governor-general, Lord W. Bentinck, had issued that odious half-batta order, robbing every officer within two hundred miles of Calcutta of a considerable portion of his allowances. Such was the excitement caused by the promulgation of this inconsiderate and unjust measure, that, immediately on our arrival at Barrackpoor, meetings were held everywhere to take into consideration what should be done. A word from the officers at that moment, and the whole Bengal army would have risen to a man. The sepoys themselves were greatly alarmed, for they could not divest themselves of the idea that a curtailment of their own pay would follow that of their officers. At our meetings, the state of feeling amongst the sepoys was often proposed as a means of acting on the Government, but the idea was instantaneously scouted by the majority, and the proper and legitimate mode of proceeding in such a case unanimously adopted. A petition to the court of directors was drawn up and approved of, and large subscriptions were raised to send home an agent to bear our petition and properly to represent our case. Colonel Baker was the officer selected for this important duty.

For a considerable time, indeed until after

the receipt of several months' pay at Barrackpoor, the sepoys, as we have already stated, could not entirely divest themselves of the idea that they were to be mulcted; but when they learned that the pay of their officers only was to be touched, they twirled their moustaches in pride, strutted about with a lordly, swaggering air, and gave every indication that they had formed an overweening estimate of their own importance; indeed, this injudicious measure was the first step towards the deterioration of the Bengal army, and to the awful tragedies of 1857 and 1858.

If ever a man was cursed, it was Lord W. Bentinck, and if ever a man deserved, through the commission of a wantonly mischievous act, the hostile feeling with which he was regarded, it was Lord W. Bentinck. The saving to the Government was most paltry; the effect was terrible, carrying dismay into the hearts of the European officers, whom it disgusted, disheartened, and, what was a thousand times worse, humiliated in the eyes of their men, whose respect for them began from that day gradually to diminish.

Every possible method was adopted of showing to the governor-general the state of feeling in the army. Officers, seeing him coming, would turn out of the way to avoid him. No one would go near the park whilst he was there. His balls were unattended, and commanding officers of corps

agreed to decline his invitations to dinner. This seemed to sting him deeply, for he sent for all the commanding officers and questioned them about the matter. What the result might have been I don't know, but one of these officers, that noble old fellow, Pat Flemming of the 38th, boldly avowed that he agreed to decline his invitations. Lord W. Bentinck was, or seemed to be, so pleased with his fearless conduct that he courted his acquaintance. Eventually he succeeded in mollifying the commanding officers, and in allaying, with the aid of time, something of the outward show of that bitter spirit his fearfully mischievous and dangerous economy had elicited.

What could have been Lord Bentinck's motive in carrying out such a measure? He must have known that the saving to the Government was exceedingly paltry, some £10,000 per annum, and he could not but be conscious how discreditable to himself as a statesman was the general discontent he had excited among the officers of the Indian army, and the risk with which that discontent was necessarily accompanied. He must have been aware that none but the strongest reasons could have induced every preceding governor-general to reject the measure, and of course he well knew that in his own time two of the wisest of the council, besides the commander in chief, had set their faces against it. It was the

general opinion that he came out pledged to carry the measure, and that this was the condition upon which he obtained the exalted office which he held. The desire of standing well with his employers, by economizing their resources, and an eye to a good pension for himself, doubtless, induced his dogged Dutch obstinacy to run at the danger with his eyes closed, as the bull runs at the flag of the matador, reckless and blind to consequences. His attempts to sell the Taj at Agra, and the bursting of the great gun for the sake of the metal, showed the meanness and baseness of his mind, and made him odious in the eyes of all. The gun was really a wonder, its dimensions being such that I saw a large artilleryman creep into it one day.

Alison says, in reference to the half batta, "But notwithstanding all this, the measure was carried into execution, and produced an amount of irritation and discontent in our Indian army, which might seriously, and for a mere trifle, have endangered the existence of our Eastern empire, if its effects had not being neutralized, as the faults of persons in authority so often are in this country, by the virtue and patriotic spirit of the subordinate officers suffering by the change."

Our brigadier, G. Penny, who was not the man to allow us to brood over our wrongs in idleness, now began to put us through a series of brigade

field-days, and to keep us at regimental drill and parade; and as he was a perfect master of his work, and knew to half an inch where every man should be, and exactly what he should do, and did not spare commanding officers and "pitch into" their subordinates, we soon began to take great interest in the work. My commanding officer gave me charge of the light company, and as the brigadier constantly employed the light infantry in his various manœuvres, there was a great emulation between the light companies of the different regiments, and this being a labour in which I delighted, I had always something pleasant to do and to think of. I used to go and see other companies drilling, run down to Calcutta, observe the light company of H.M.'s 16th at work, and try to pick up some new manœuvres, and the proper way of doing them. At length we were quite looked up to by the other light companies at the station, and I hoped to get great praise from the brigadier, as well as from my own colonel. But the very next field-day after I had elated myself by encouraging this hope, I got such a rebuff as made me for the moment very indignant.

We were left in front—that is, my company was in the front of the regiment leading the column. (This for non-military.) The skirmishers were ordered out to cover an advance. My company as the centre was to regulate. So I gave the necessary

order to "extend from the centre." By this means the company would extend during the advance, and be in their proper position by the time that the other companies had filed to the front, preparatory to extending. But whilst the men were extending, the brigadier came up on their flank, from which position the movement at first looks a little confused. No doubt, therefore, under an erroneous impression he shouted out—

"What are you about, sir, taking your men over the parade like a parcel of sheep? Close them, sir; file to the front, and extend from the left."

If he had come up in rear, or arrived half a minute later, he would have seen at a glance that we were all right, and what he wanted would have been done in half the usual time. Unfortunately he did not, and so I got snubbed, an indignity with which I was obliged to put up. My colonel consoled me, and so did the brigade-major; but I never again attempted the new dodge, but went on in the old stupid routine way.

Before I had been six months at Barrackpoor, my sailor brother, who was an officer on board the H. C. ship *Inglis*, came up on leave, and spent a month with me. Of course I had to show him the "lions," and try to make the visit as agreeable to him as possible. Fortunately, I found ample means of doing so, as I had got two nice English

boats on the river, which were a constant source of amusement to us.

My bungalow was in the second row, near the Flag Staff Ghaut (a ghaut, fair and kind readers, is a set of steps or stairs on an inclined plane down to a river or piece of water), and off this ghaut my two boats were anchored. Nearly every day my sailor brother and myself used to go for a cruise on the river, or a pull over to Serampoor, the Danish settlement on the other side. One afternoon, something beyond ordinary seemed to be going on next door, at our neighbour's—Colonel ——, and we soon learnt that he was to have a large dinner-party that evening. For certain reasons we thought that we ought to have been invited on the occasion; and as this favour had not been extended to us, our dignity was considerably ruffled. There was a nice breeze blowing, the tide was up, the air was pleasant, so we proposed to take a cruise on the river by way of cooling our indignation. Now adjoining the enclosure to my bungalow was another smaller one containing a few detached buildings, in one of which a baker, well known to the station, had established his oven. Through this enclosure, and in front of the baker's shop, was a short cut to the ghaut, which we often took to save time; and by this short cut our evil genius led us that evening. As we approached the baker's shop-front,

we saw displayed nice dinner rolls baked to a turn, pretty-looking biscuits and rich cake, and in the midst of all a tin just out of the oven, on which were a dozen raspberry jam tartlets, crust light as a feather, and plethoric with the preserved dainty.

"Hallo, baker, what's all this?" I exclaimed.

"Colonel Sahib give party, master; plenty gentlemans come."

"I say, George, smell good, don't they?"

"He wouldn't ask us to his party, Tom."

That was quite enough—there was more in these words than met the ear—we made a rush at the tin, and in two minutes, in spite of the vehement protestations of the terrified baker, the tartlets were gobbled up. This was our revenge, and a rather sweet one it was. I think I see yet the baker's ridiculous figure; his anger, his terror, his gestures, only increased our delight, and sent us to our boat in ecstasies of laughter.

But after getting under weigh, when we had time for reflection, came the question, "Suppose I'm hauled up before the brigadier for this?"

"Oh, never mind," said my brother; "I'll drop down the river and join my ship, and you can say it was me, and that you're very sorry. Dudman (my brother's captain) will only laugh at it, and get me out of the scrape."

"All right—that'll do."

But the sequel was not so serious as we expected, and my brother did not for some days "drop down the river. In the evening, the company duly assembled at the colonel's; the dinner was announced, and all went on well enough until the third course, when there was some delay and difficulty in arranging the table. The host, seeing that all was not right, and unable to account for the interruption, addressed the khansamah, saying—

"Khansamah,[1] where are the jam tartlets?"

The stately-looking old fellow went up to his master, and joining his hands together in the Eastern manner, replied, most respectfully—

"Khoodawund neeamut. Your lordship, the Mr. Seatons saw them at the baker's, and ate them all."

The attention of every one had been attracted, and on hearing those words uttered by the khansamah with a visage as serious as if the world had come to an end, there was a roar of laughter all round the table, in which the colonel goodnaturedly joined. As many of our acquaintances happened to be dining there, next morning the story was known all over the station, and many a hearty laugh it occasioned. The colonel, who was a shrewd fellow, showed himself at the same

[1] The man who does all the marketing, and manages everything regarding the table.

time to be a perfect gentleman, for he called on us next day, hoped we liked the tartlets, and was very sorry he had been prevented having the pleasure of seeing us partake of them at his table. We looked foolish enough, and had not a word to say; but he saw at a glance how the land lay, and regarding it as a boyish freak, like some of which he may at one time have had to accuse himself, he shook us kindly by the hand, and hoped we should always be good friends. I need not add that we were not "hauled up" before the brigadier this time.

Not long after this, some spirited individual in Calcutta imported a 'bus from England, and started it to run between Calcutta and Barrackpoor. Of course it was extensively patronized by the young subs, who could not always afford the expense of a gig to themselves; and to such an extent did they avail themselves of it, that duty was at times seriously hindered. If an officer, for example, was suddenly wanted for any unforeseen piece of duty (a very common occurrence), he was frequently off to Calcutta for the day by the "'bus." As this would not do at all, the brigadier issued an order that no one should go to Calcutta, even for the day, without previously obtaining leave—a restriction which the subs thought would not do, regarding it, as in fact it was, as a sort of imprisonment or confine-

ment to bounds. The order was, therefore, constantly evaded, for it was most troublesome to ask for leave for the day, the delay in getting it being so great. The brigadier, soon finding out how his order was evaded, used sometimes to ride in the morning to the place whence the 'bus started, and occasionally sent his major of brigade. For a time, this stopped our agreeable little trips. Other plans were then hit upon, and a few still occasionally succeeded in getting away to Calcutta. Eventually, however, these tricks were discovered and put an end to, and all leave was stopped also.

One day, a party of five of us desired urgently to go to Calcutta to a sale of horses that was to take place. We accordingly procured a buggy, and half an hour before gun-fire next morning, four of us tumbled into it, and the fifth rode a pony. We went through the park, and cut into the Calcutta road a mile and a half below the starting-place. Here we waited until the 'bus arrived and picked us up, for we had secured places the night before. There were only two individuals in the 'bus besides ourselves, reclining in the farther corners, but whether male or female we could scarcely tell, the interior was so gloomy, in consequence of the shade of the high thick trees on each side of the road and the faint morning light. All that we could see was that

they were well wrapped in cloaks, and, whoever they might be, it was a matter of little concern to us. So we chuckled freely over the neat way in which we had "done" the brigadier, and were cracking our jokes about it, when, on coming to an opening in the trees, one of these individuals, whose visage was previously invisible, suddenly sat upright, and throwing back his cloak, revealed in the fast-increasing light the dreaded brigadier!

"Good morning, gentlemen," was his salutation to the trembling subs.

Just fancy the "coup de théâtre;" imagine our guilty look, and try to realize the wicked little smile that played at the corners of the dreaded officer's mouth.

Seeing we were too confused to make any reply to his salutation, he said no more to us, but sat looking as uncomfortable as ourselves, for if he had taken anything but a most indulgent view of our conduct the consequences might have been serious. However, the brigadier soon forgave us, and before we arrived in Calcutta we were chatting as amicably as possible, explaining to him, among other things, the object of our surreptitious visit to the city.

Whilst at Barrackpoor I married very happily, and though only a subaltern, as I had means independent of my pay, my wife and self lived very comfortably.

In November, 1833, my regiment was ordered to Jumaulpoor, on the banks of the Burrampooter, and as marching in that country is nearly impracticable from the net-work of rivers and streams that intersect it in all directions, we went by boats.

Our fleet, composed of about sixty boats, was led by the colonel's, followed immediately by mine. One afternoon, the boats unavoidably straggled a good deal, in consequence of having to pass several places where the bed of the river made a sharp turn. The stream too was unusually rapid, requiring the crews of two boats to pull one past this point. As only a few of the leading boats, about a dozen, were within sight, the colonel determined to anchor, and halt, for a day, at a nice-looking convenient place, close to a pretty village on a high bank, at which we had just arrived. Below the bank was a long, low, clean-looking spit of sand, a most suitable place for the men and boats' crews to land and cook their food. Contrary to his usual habit, the colonel landed at once and proceeded in the direction of the village. As I was impatient to get some sporting, I jumped on shore too, and soon joined him, intending to make inquiries in the village for snipe ground.

We went forward, congratulating ourselves on being near such a nice quiet village; but on

ascending the bank a ghastly and horrible sight met our eyes. Not eight paces from us lay four corpses discoloured by incipient decay, and covered with thousands of flies. Their eyes were open and glazed, their mouths grinning horribly, their hands clenched, and their bodies contracted as in agony, and so emaciated that they resembled skeletons. The air was heavy and dank, and the atmosphere was pervaded with an odour like that of the charnel-house. Not a sign of life was to be seen in the village, not a sound of any kind was heard—there was not even the familiar bark of a dog to break the horrible silence. Even those scavengers and attendants of death, the crows and vultures, were absent, perhaps because they were too busy elsewhere.

The cause of this melancholy spectacle we soon learned. Cholera in its most dreaded form had swept through the village, and the living had fled from its terrible presence, leaving the dead unburied, and the dying to linger out their last moments in agony. The colonel, who never in the most trying scenes lost his presence of mind, quietly turned round to me, and said—"We must push over at once to the other side of the river, or we shall have the cholera in the fleet. Come along; don't say a word about what we have seen, but go and make the boats shove off as fast as you can;" and as he neared his own boat

he called out, "We will cross over; this is a nasty dirty place, and there is nothing to be got."

As every one knew the colonel's antipathy to anchor and halt at a dirty place, the people shoved off at once, no one suspecting the truth. We thus escaped the almost inevitable consequences of a foul malarious atmosphere working on men whose minds would have been greatly depressed by seeing death in such a horrible form as that in which it was exhibited to us. How such spectacles, and the fear with which they fill the mind, predispose the body to the influence of the disease, I shall afterwards have occasion to show. For many days the sick reports were looked for with great anxiety, but the men continued perfectly healthy, and we reached our destination without any mishap, no one but ourselves knowing anything of the sight we had witnessed. I don't believe that either the colonel or myself have spoken of that circumstance to any one from that day to this, when I for the first time make it known.

Jumaulpoor was in those days a terribly out-of-the-way place, very primitive in its appearance. There was not a brick bungalow in the whole cantonment. The officers' houses were timber frames with mat walls and the usual thatch roof. I bought one of the mat houses on the banks of the river with a bit of garden to it, but it was such a vile hole, and so infested with rats, that

I determined on pulling it down and building a brick house. There were, however, no bricks to be purchased anywhere, nor men who could make them within eighty miles, no carpenters who could construct doors or windows, no painters or glaziers, nor any artificers beyond some village blacksmiths, sawyers, and thatchers. But people in India are not daunted by trifles, so I called my tent-pitcher, who was a sharp fellow, and told him that I was going to build a house.

"Bhot acha, sahib" (very well, sir), he said.

"Now, Chota, you go to the bazaar and buy me a couple of planks, and tell the cotwal to send me twenty labourers" (coolies).

"But, sahib, they can't make bricks; they have no moulds."

"I'll make the moulds," I said, "and you can show the men where to dig clay and how to mix it, and I think we can manage to teach them how to make bricks."

"Bhot acha, sahib. We'll make the bricks."

So off he went, ordered the coolies, and brought the planks. I had a capital tool chest, not gentleman's tools, but good sound carpenter's instruments, and as I was tolerable at the trade myself, I soon had the moulds made. In about a week's time, Chota and I managed to get the coolies to make bricks quite tidily and rapidly; and in the meantime I wrote to Dacca, eighty

miles off, and got some bricklayers, and carpenters of a rough kind. Sawyers I procured on the spot, and I soon showed them how to make the roof, doing part of it myself, making also the first door-posts and sills as patterns.

The walls were soon run up and the roof timbers put in their places. All my calculations were true to an inch, and everything fitted well. Every evening at sunset I called the men off work and paid them their day's wages, giving a trifle more to the most industrious.

The work thus went on merrily; glass, putty, and paint I ordered up from Calcutta, and with them glazed the windows; Chota, under my instructions, painting the doors. In about four months' time I finished the house, took possession, laid out the garden and planted it.

Jumaulpoor was an excellent place for sporting. The very cream of hog-hunting was to be had there. As soon as the rains cease and the river subsides, the hogs come down from the Garrow hills to feast on the cultivation round the villages, and on a peculiar grass that grows on the sand-banks in the river—in the form of what botanists call large stools, which throw out thick runners in every direction, as sweet as sugar-cane. On this, as soon as it is well grown, the hogs feed and get fat, and then the fun commences.

20265

The collector of the civil station, a first-rate hand at "pig-sticking," as it is technically termed, used generally to arrange the hunting parties. He would borrow elephants from all the surrounding zemindars, collect intelligence about the game, and settle the line of country we were to take. We arranged with the colonel about leave and the Government elephants, and took our servants, tents, and provisions for the number of days we were to be out, and something over, in case of friends coming unexpectedly.

The nights in this part of the country, for eight months in the year, are cold and chill from the very heavy dew that falls; and as there are tigers about in the heavy grass jungles, the large herds of cattle that are kept by the villagers are shut up at night in sheds, called gwals, where they are warm and dry, and safe from beasts of prey. These gwals are built in different places. One herd may have two or three, and when one is occupied the other is not. We used to send and take possession of one of these sheds, clean it out, and live there instead of in our tents. The villagers were delighted to see us, for we rid them of their greatest plagues, the wild boars and tigers. We also spent a little money amongst them, in return for which the whole resources of the village were placed at our disposal.

Hog-hunting is the king of sports. Fox-hunting in England is all very well—a mob of pretty dogs, yow-yowing musically after a poor little beast that is only too happy to escape if he can. The only excitement is the gallop and the jumps, the raspers, flying over a brook or tumbling into it; and perhaps, after losing the poor vermin, the sportsman, on a cold winter evening, discovers himself miles from home, on a jaded horse, a cold sleety shower driving in his face. Still, when he finds himself at his own fireside, he expatiates on the "glorious sport" he has had. Glorious sport, indeed! The hypocrite! let him go to India and try a turn or two at hog-hunting. Put him on a good horse, place in his hand a sharp, nicely-balanced seven-foot spear, and station him just inside the edge of the jungle, with a bit of open before him. Let him hear the elephants coming, trumpeting, and the beaters giving their warning cry; let him see the sounder break cover, and get into the open; then let him gallop after them, and with a friend single out the big boar, and try for the first spear. If the boar is a good one, he will go at a splitting pace for perhaps a couple of miles, and if he finds he can't escape, will stop all at once, turn, and charge down like lightning, with a fierce grunt, upon one of the two. Let it be our sportsman. He may perhaps stop the brute's charge, but he won't kill him, and then, when

he turns and tries for the second spear, the really dangerous one, he will see what a devil a wounded boar is. He won't think much of fox-hunting after he has once succeeded in despatching the more formidable animal.

If the mere riding at the raspers and the brooks, and the chances of a break-neck tumble are his delight, he will find an agreeable variety in hog-hunting, and as many chances of maiming himself as he can in the pursuit of the fox, with the additional zest of perhaps coming across a tiger, or finding himself in the middle of a herd of wild buffaloes, by whom both his horse and himself may be ripped up. It requires firm nerves, a steady hand, a correct eye, and presence of mind to spear a good boar properly.

The boar is a cunning, knowing, fierce, revengeful brute, as the following anecdote will to some extent prove. An officer of the regiment we relieved, one day, singled out a boar from a sounder that came through cantonments, to the upper part of which he ran him. The bank there shelves down and joins a spit of sand that runs out into the river. The officer was close on the hog, but not close enough to plant the spear. The two went down the bank, but where it and the sand joined there was a bit of quicksand, and the horse beginning to flounder in it, the officer, as a last chance, threw the spear, and, of course,

missed his aim. Presently, not hearing the tramp of the horse at his heels, the hog slackened his pace, then stopped, turned round, and sat down on his hind quarters; after which advancing, he charged down on the horse, cut him, and made off. After a short flight he again turned round, and seeing the horse still floundering, he charged down a second time, and ripped him right open. The poor animal died on the spot. Had the officer retained his spear (which under no circumstances should ever be thrown or parted with) he would have killed the hog instead of losing his horse.

The danger that may arise in more ways than one from throwing the spear, was exemplified by an incident that happened to one of the officers of my regiment. Captain F—— was very fond of throwing the spear, and one day, when we were out hog-hunting, he was mounted on a handsome black charger, following close on the heels of a fine boar. It happened that, from the broken nature of the ground, he could not come alongside the boar, or get even near enough to touch him with his spear, so rising in his stirrups, and carefully poising his weapon, he threw it with such force against the hog bounding along, that, though the shaft barely touched the animal's back, the spear received a cant, the loaded end flew forward, and the point was a little thrown up. At that moment Captain F——'s horse, too near

to be turned aside, rushed on it, and the spear went through the right thigh and came out twelve inches below the tail. The horse gave three or four tremendous plunges, the shaft was snapped, and the spear-point being unusually broad, the shaft was kicked out. In three weeks the wound was healed, but the horse would never face a hog again.

The clouds of misfortune now began to gather round me. I first lost all my little fortune in the agency houses in Calcutta, and not long after my dear wife was taken from me. Saddened by these discouraging and melancholy events, I obtained three years' furlough, left India, and returned home, landing on the 10th May, 1836, after an absence of nearly fourteen years.

CHAPTER V.

Return to India—News of Affghan Campaign—Proceed to Simla—To Ferozepoor—Sir H. Lawrence—Join Convoy going down the Indus—Boats—Queer Mode of Fishing on the Indus—Canals—Arrive at Sukkur—Difficulties—Reach Shikarpoor—Join Convoy—First March—Terrible Heat—Rear-guard—Council of War—Cross the Desert—Aidena—Dreadful March and Mortality—Reach Baugh, and passage of the Derest accomplished.

IN August 1838, I sailed from England, to return to India with my wife, to whom I had been recently united, and we went by the old route round the Cape.

On arriving off the Sandheads, the pilot came on board, bringing, as usual, a number of the latest newspapers. I got hold of one, and the very first paragraph that met my eye was to the effect that my regiment had marched with the army of the Indus for the campaign in Affghanistan.

Those who have been similarly situated can conceive our state of mind; those who have not will understand it when I tell them that I had brought a young wife far from her home and her friends to a strange land, where she had neither relations, connexions, nor ac-

quaintance; and the question which in these perplexing circumstances I had immediately to decide was, should I leave her alone in this strange land, awaiting in suspense the fate of her husband, or send her home again? The annoyance caused by the unexpected news we had heard was, as all may imagine, very great; and in the uncomfortable state of mind into which it threw us we proceeded to Calcutta.

The General commanding the division to which my regiment had belonged was General Duncan. Whilst residing in Edinburgh previous to my marriage, I had learnt that the General's mother was residing in our immediate neighbourhood. As I thought it possible she might be desirous of communicating with him by so favourable an opportunity, I sent to say I was shortly going to the station where her son was commanding, and that I should be very happy if I could convey to him anything she might wish to send. The message was well timed, for the venerable old lady, wishing to send her portrait to her son, intimated to me that it would be conferring a great favour if I would undertake to convey it to him. This, of course, I gladly consented to do, and she furnished me with letters to the General.

On arriving at Madras, I took the precaution to forward these letters by post, so that on arriving at Calcutta we found a reply waiting us

from the General, inviting us to his house, and in allusion to military affairs, telling us at the same time that it was expected that the army would not be absent more than twelve months at farthest.

We reached Simla in the early part of April, and after making the best arrangements I could for my wife, I started, and travelled in all haste to Ferozepoor. The late lamented Sir H. Lawrence was then our political agent at that station. I had written to him explaining my difficulties, and begging him to secure a boat for me, and to aid me in some other matters that I should not have time to accomplish myself. With that kindness and largeness of heart for which he was distinguished, and for which he subsequently became so well known throughout India, he did for me even more than I had asked, for on arriving at Ferozepoor I found a boat waiting for me, all the arrangements for my departure already made, and a home at his house until the fleet should receive orders to sail.

On the third day of my arrival I joined the convoy. We had heavy guns for the fort at Bukkur, and a large quantity of ammunition and stores. The boats on the Sutledge are the most singular things I ever saw. They are flat-bottomed, very shallow, and broader at the stern than at the bow, which rises into a peak some

fourteen feet out of the water. In shape something like a flat-iron, they are not more than twenty inches deep. In this queer conveyance a straw hut of two rooms had been built, with doors to each room, and as all the boats in the fleet—about forty-five or fifty—were exactly like mine, they looked, when dropping down the stream, like a floating village.

The scenery on this part of the Sutledge is by no means interesting. The banks of the river below Ferozepoor are as dull and monotonous as it is possible to imagine; for miles and miles there is nothing to be seen but grass and tamarisk jungle; villages, which are merely small collections of grass huts, the walls of which I suppose are of mud, occur only at very distant intervals. In the two hundred and odd miles between Ferozepoor and Buhawalpoor, there were not half a dozen towns or moderate-sized villages to be seen; and everywhere were indications that within a few miles of the banks of the river there was a vast dreary waste of sandy desert.

As we approached Buhawalpoor, the remains of ancient canals of large size running inland from the river were frequently met with. One, near which we chanced to cast anchor for the night, I examined, and found that it was sixteen feet wide at the bottom, and could be

traced for several miles inland. Large trees of tamarisk were growing in the bed, and in some places both bed and banks were covered with dense jungle, a perfect wilderness of vegetation. And yet the presence of these great works proves that an active population must once have existed in these parts; and doubtless the ground, now covered with jungle, must at some distant period have been carefully cultivated. What can have swept away the people whose labour and industry are attested to us by works so enduring? By what series of causes can a land, once in all probability cultivated and prosperous, have been reduced to such a state of decay as the desert we beheld around us? Was it disease, or war, or the corruption and vice of the rulers, that had depopulated the country, and reduced it to a condition upon which we could not but look with sadness?

Timber of any size is very scarce, the country being either covered with low bush jungle, with an odd tree or two of tamarisk here and there, and with vast prairies of grass. Boats consequently are scarce and dear, and as fish is plentiful, the poor fishermen have been driven to make use of a cheap and fragile substitute. This is an earthen pot some three feet wide, one foot deep, and with a mouth of the same width, on which is laid a folded cloth. Net in hand, the fisherman

wades into the stream; and taking a light spring, he places his chest on the mouth of the pot, his feet dangling in the water, and serving as oars and rudder, and shoves off from shore. His net, which is of an oval shape, is fastened to two light flexible rods, hinged together at their extremities like the mouth of a clasp purse. A sinker of about three pounds weight to open the net, is fastened to the lower rod (jaw, I call it) with a stout cord, which is held in the hand. A cord is attached to the upper jaw also, seven or eight feet in length. When the man, mounted on this queer float, reaches the middle of the stream, he lowers his net to the depth he wishes by the upper cord, which he keeps fastened round his hand, and then slacking the lower one by the weight of the sinker, thus immediately opens the net. Paddling with his feet, he keeps pace with the stream, and as soon as he feels a fish strike the net he whips up the lower cord, by which it is shut, hauls it up, takes out the fish, drops it into the pot, and goes on again.

The Pullah fish, which resemble gigantic herring, always swim in mid stream about three feet below the surface, and as they are very plentiful when in season, the fisherman is rarely more than ten minutes or a quarter of an hour without catching one or more in his net. When he has gone far enough down stream he lands,

takes up his pot, passes his shoulder inside, and marches home. Of course, if his boat hits on a snag, down he goes, or has to swim for it; but snags in Indian rivers are rarely met with.

Just above the junction of the Sutledge and the Indus we had to change our boats. The shallow awkward boats of the former river are quite unfit to navigate the now enormous stream; for in anything of a breeze they would inevitably be swamped, as the swell is very considerable. It took us two days to effect the exchange, and then we were infinitely safer, though not half so comfortable, for the huts, made for a broad shallow boat, would not fit into a narrow and deep one. Warmth, however, we did not require, as we had rather too much of it; air we did require, and got it in abundance.

I arrived at Sukkur on the 19th of May, and proceeding at once to the brigade and commissariat offices, was greeted with the cheerless intelligence that I could not get a camel to continue my journey. I went to the brigadier, who took compassion on me, and gave me an order on the commissariat for three; I wanted five, but was thankful for what I could get. I went off and swopped my fine well-built Futtygurh tent, which was heavy, for a poor Bombay concern, small, thin, and ill made, but light and an easy

load for a camel. I also got a pony into the bargain.

Amongst other kind acts shown me at Ferozepoor by Sir H. Lawrence, he procured for me three respectable servants. One of these, a table attendant named Hyder, was a descendant of the prophet, and as such entitled to wear the green turban. He received unbounded respect from all his co-religionists, and, as I was about to march through a Mahomedan country, his services would be truly invaluable. A host in himself, he really did the work of three men, and did it well. I had no groom, and he took care of my pony; I had no valet, and he took charge of my clothes; I had no cook, and he prepared my dinner and served it up and waited on me. Hyder, who was treated with great respect by all Mahomedans, could get me anything I wanted.

After a short consultation with him, I started at sunset, determining, with his advice, to defer getting what I wanted until we reached Shikarpoor, where he engaged to procure camels for me. We marched steadily on until 11 o'clock, when I halted by a little stream of water that was coming from some distant well. Two of the camels crossed the little stream as a matter of course; the third seemed frightened, hung back, and got obstinate, and no pulling, beating, or goading would make him put his foot over,

though it was but a step. The servants made a rush at him to push him over, but it was of no avail, down he sat in the water. As I was here near the most ticklish part of the road, I had no desire to remain longer than was absolutely necessary in a spot where, at any moment, we might be exposed to the danger of attack. There was a Belooch village within three miles, and bands of these marauders, who were known to be about, had robbed and murdered some of our camp-followers close to this very spot. I had with me only a few dismounted troopers, and as they were without fire-arms they were not good for much. There was a small village close by, but the good-will of the people was very doubtful, and I could hope for neither help nor protection from them. After an hour's halt I determined to move on again, and tried to get the wretched camel to rise, but he was immovable. The servants pulled his nose-string, beat, and goaded him, and did all they could, but he would not move. We tried every device we could imagine to stir him up, even setting fire to a quantity of straw underneath him, but nothing could move the obstinate animal from the position he had selected. As I saw there was no hope of getting him to stir, I would not allow my servants to torment him any more, but made up my mind to sacrifice everything

that I could possibly spare. Wine, spirits (a very small store), went at once, clothes and some books followed, and I do not know what I might not have thrown away, when, just after midnight, we heard a creaking sound, which, as it gradually approached, we discovered to be one of the little carts of the country, with wheels of solid wood, eighteen inches high, the shafts and frame of bamboo, and drawn by two bullocks. I seized it at once, collected and tumbled on my traps, and started instantly.

An old fellow we overtook on the road told me he was going to Shikarpoor, and said he knew the way quite well. I foolishly trusted him, and he had nearly led us to a Belooch village, where of course I should have been plundered, if not killed, when my suspicions were fortunately aroused; and as I was retracing my road I met some people coming from Shikarpoor, from whom I got the proper direction, and without further accident arrived at my destination, and was warmly greeted by my comrades.

Thanks to the energy with which I had made my preparations and pushed on from Sukkur, I had two clear days at Shikarpoor before the convoy started, and now the descendant of the prophet stood me in good stead. He got me some tolerable camels, a capital groom, and

almost everything I wanted. What he could not get my brother officers supplied.

Our convoy consisted of four thousand camels laden with grain, stores of all kinds, and ten lacs of rupees for the army of the Indus. There were also three hundred camels loaded with wine and spirits which an English merchant was taking up to the army by Lord Auckland's permission, by whose orders he had been supplied with these useful animals. A thorough nuisance he and his camels proved.

The escort consisted of two troops of irregular cavalry, a wing of the 23rd Bombay N.I., a wing of the 42nd Bengal N.I., a company of one of the Shah's regiments, and a troop of irregular cavalry. There were also a number of convalescents proceeding to join their regiments, and a mixed multitude of people who should never have been allowed to accompany the camp. These followers in India are innumerable, and troublesome beyond all description. One half of them live on plunder, the accumulation of which is their sole object in accompanying the army. The officers were, Major Newport, commanding; Captains Liptrap, Manning, and Seaton; Lieutenants Chambers, Hay, Beaufort, and Travers; Ensign Newnham, Dr. Halloran, two sergeants, and one commissariat sergeant. There was also the European merchant, with the supplies above mentioned.

Before the convoy left Shikarpoor, we Bengal officers organized a mess. Each member subscribed a certain sum of money to provide the necessary articles, and each lent for the common good a servant, or whatever he possessed that might be useful. By this plan we economized our carriage. A smaller number of servants was required, our expenses were lessened, and our comfort was increased.

On the 23rd of May, we commenced our march. May, be it remembered, is one of the hottest months in the year. At noon the sun was directly over our heads, throwing no shadow, and there was not a cloud in the sky to moderate the fierceness of his heat. We started just after sunset. The road was a mere cart-track, with numerous cattle-paths on each side; and all round was a dense tamarisk jungle. The camels were sent on two abreast, and in this order they got along very well for two miles, when their march was suddenly checked by a narrow but deep cut from the Indus, which, in consequence of the rising of the stream, was at this period filled. The banks, which were steep, had been sloped down by the troops that had preceded us, the cut, when they passed, being dry, and offering no impediment to their march. The water, however, having by this time made the hard alluvial soil as greasy and slippery as soap, the conse-

quence was that, before a hundred of our camels had passed through, two or three had fallen, and the passage became partially blocked. As we had no trenching tools, we could not fill the cut. An axe, however, was procured, and with it we cut down some jungle, which we threw in to give the camels a firmer footing. With every precaution, however, many fell, and before one could be assisted to rise, it had to be unloaded, after which it was conveyed to the further side, where we had the trouble of again arranging and securing on its back the burden that it had carried. As fast as one camel was dragged out another fell; then two, three, and more, until the passage was entirely blocked. The stream of camels coming up from the rear was thus checked, and all got jammed together in a state of hopeless confusion. After several had passed through the water, the droppings from their legs moistened the soil for yards beyond, rendering the ground so slippery that many fell, and were seriously injured. We were delayed many hours at this water channel, and as we passed several others, where a similar detention was experienced, the rear-guard did not reach camp until one o'clock of the 24th, men and officers utterly overcome with fatigue from such heavy and long-continued labours.

When the camels arrived in camp, they were sent out to graze under a strong guard, and at dusk,

when they returned, one of mine was missing. After a long search he was found amongst those belonging to the merchant, not, as we had reason to believe, without that worthy's cognizance.

The next day's march was a repetition of that just described, and although we were not embarrassed by so many water-channels, the camels became greatly exhausted from remaining loaded so many hours. If we could have marched on without interruption, the journey would have been no fatigue. Twelve or fourteen miles a day, or more, can be accomplished by cattle pretty heavily laden; but when a march of five hours is protracted to fourteen or eighteen, the mere pressure of the heavy burden on the animal's back is exhausting, even in a cold climate, but doubly so in the burning heat of Scinde, in the month of May, when the thermometer in the shade rises to 117°, and occasionally indicates even a higher temperature.

In the evening of the second day, one of my camel-men came running in to say that the merchant's servants had seized two of my best camels, and would not give them up. I was very indignant at this second attempt, and was about to take vigorous measures for the recovery of my property, when Hyder came forward, and said to me,

"Sahib, leave it to me—I'll manage."

At sunset, just before the time when the camels returned to camp, Mr. Hyder made his appearance, bringing back in the string my proper number of camels, but two of them uncommonly fine-looking animals, which formed no part of my original herd. The moment he saw me, Hyder said, "Give me your big scissors, sahib." I gave them, and he and the men with him at once began, with scissors and knife, to cut off the long hair from the neck, throat, shoulders, and tails of the camels, an act which they accomplished with great glee and in some haste, lest they should have been interrupted in the middle of it. The hair had scarcely been removed, when the merchant's servants arrived in search of certain camels which they had missed from their master's herd; but as, after a narrow examination of all belonging to me, they were unable to identify them, they became exceedingly angry, and caused such a disturbance that it was found necessary to kick them off the ground. They immediately hurried off to complain to the commanding officer, from whom, however, they got no comfort, but were plainly told that their frequent impudent attempts to change their overladen beasts for the best in camp were well known, and they must not be surprised if the sufferers retaliated. I kept the camels, and arranged to have them fed at my

tent. No further attempts, however, were made to seize them, and thus I got two very fine beasts for two that were undoubtedly much inferior.

The distance from Shikarpoor to Rojhan is forty and a half miles, and is usually divided into three marches, though very frequently also into two, everyone being anxious to hurry through this unhealthy jungle as fast as possible. But the great delay caused by the water, as above mentioned, and the consequent fatigue to the cattle, obliged us to make five marches of it. It was a fatal necessity. By day, the heat in the close jungle was intense and stifling, and the heavy dews at night chilled into the very bones. The only forage the camels could get was the tamarisk, and being full of turpentine, it had on them the effect of a strong purgative, that told fatally on their strength, and even killed some of them.

On the third day's march, the poor animals were so much affected by the heat, by the fatigue of being loaded for so many hours, and by constant feeding on the tamarisk, that some of them were seen to vomit, a thing thought impossible, and all were so weakened, that it was pitiable to see them. It was the duty of the officer of the day to see the treasure laden, and bring it up to its place in column under the proper escort. This duty, though it could be accomplished in half an hour, was found to be almost unbearable, the stench

from the camels being so great. During these short marches, over a distance of only forty and a half miles altogether, were sown the seeds of disease that subsequently grew and ripened into death.

On the 28th of May we reached Rojhan, on the edge of the Desert, and here our troubles found a little relief, though we were greatly alarmed at the prospect of what was ahead, namely, the probable scarcity of water. Close to the little mud fort at this place were two large wells containing the only water within some miles, for we had left the water-courses behind. During the day these wells unfortunately ran dry, and there was not a drop of water for man or beast.

A small detachment of troops had been posted here to hold the fort as a check to the incursions of the Beloochees, and to keep up a communication with Shikarpoor. The officer commanding the party, expecting that the wells would run dry, had with prudent foresight provided some well-sinkers. He instantly set the men to work, and in a few hours we got an abundant supply of water. This was fortunate for the moment, but our prospect for the future was rather ominous. We were obliged to halt the next day, and in the morning intelligence was received that the wells at Burshoree, the first oasis in the Desert, distant twenty-six and a half miles, were dry—a report which, combined with

those relating to the state of the country, was alarming enough, even after allowing for the usual amount of oriental embellishments. It seemed apparent that the season was too late, and that to cross the Desert would be no ordinary struggle.

On receipt of the intelligence that the wells at Burshorce were dry, a council of war was held to decide whether the attempt to cross the Desert should be made. A convoy of two thousand five hundred camels had crossed six weeks earlier, and the officer commanding had written to the authorities describing the sufferings of himself and his men, from heat and the want of water, and declaring that it would be madness to send another convoy at this season of the year. The people in the villages said that such a thing had never been heard of as a kafilah traversing the Desert in the month of May, and that, if we tried it, not one of us would live to tell the tale. On the other hand, the stores were imperatively called for, the treasure was equally required, and as the want of it might seriously embarrass our commissariat, and compromise the success of our army, the council decided that, whatever might be the issue, the attempt should be made.

Every preparation that experience could suggest, that ingenuity could devise, or money procure, was accordingly made for an undertaking the

desperate nature of which we were all perfectly conscious of. Spare camels were provided with kajawahs (a sort of litter) to bring on those who might fall sick, others were procured to carry water in barrels for the Hindoos, in leather bags for the Mahomedans, and every sepoy and camp-follower was ordered to bear in his hand a lotah (brass pot) filled with water. Every officer, too, was directed to carry at his saddle-bow a chaghul (leather bottle), holding about three quarts of water.

In the evening of the 29th we struck camp, and commenced our march at sunset. As soon as we entered into the Desert a wind sprang up, gentle at first, then hot and fierce, bringing with it particles of dust, fine as the finest powder, which penetrated everything, and, with the heat still radiating from the soil, created an intolerable thirst. The sepoys, each with his heavy musket, sixty rounds of ammunition, clothing, havresack with necessaries, accoutrements, and his brass pot filled with water, were heavily laden for such a march, the burden doubling the already unbearable oppression of their tight-fitting woollen uniforms. The condition of the men in such circumstances was pitiable, and every minute their sufferings increased.

The water in the men's brass pots was soon exhausted, for the hot wind and the dust, as I said

before, created an intolerable thirst, and they drank without restraint. At midnight they began to flag, then to murmur, and shortly there was a universal cry of, "Water—water!" Major N—— halted, put a strong guard over the water as fast as the camels came up, and it was then served out. Such was the eagerness of the poor creatures that a frightful tumult arose. The camp-followers, in the hope that they might succeed in obtaining by some lucky chance a draught of water, rushed in among the sepoys. But the guard kept the people back. A sergeant was then appointed to serve it out, and so great was the distress which many suffered from the want of it, that even the all-powerful prejudices of caste were forgotten, and Hindoos drank out of the leathern bags, in common with the Mahomedans, water served out by a European sergeant.

Each sepoy came up in succession and received his portion of water. Some were in despair at the smallness of the quantity, many were even in a half-raving state, while a few, whose sufferings had not been so great as those of their comrades, quietly took the allowance that was handed to them.

But the poor heavily-laden camp-followers, some carrying infants, were in a pitiable condition, and the children's cries were heartrending.

Strong men, exhausted by carrying loads, were scattered on the ground, moaning and beating their breasts; others lying down quite exhausted. My own servants were well off, as I had two spare camels. On one were carried two large bags of water, on the other my servants rode, two and two alternately; and I had my own water-bottle at my saddle-bow. When my people came up, I asked if they wanted water. "No, they had a bottle;" and as Hyder declared that all the water in the bags could be spared, we filled up our vessels, and served out the rest to the poor children, their parents, and others, as far as it would go. Poor things, they well repaid us with grateful thanks.

After an hour's halt we started again and pushed on faster, and, most fortunately, the burning wind gradually subsided. As everyone felt the necessity of water, the camels were urged on, but they could go little beyond two and a half miles in the hour. Towards daybreak our line of march lay parallel to a ravine. I rode a little distance from the column, and followed the ravine in all its windings, in hopes of finding water, as I observed several moist places. A sepoy, who skirted it with me, was in such a state that, when I spoke to him, he could scarcely reply; his tongue rattled in his mouth, and his whole countenance was distorted

with agony. I had read of such suffering, but had never witnessed it until now.

Day dawned upon the frightful waste—a boundless plain of hard alluvial soil, apparently deposited by the annual overflow of the Indus. The ravines we met with were the channels cut by the retiring waters. Not a tree, bush, shrub, or blade of grass was to be seen—nothing but a scene of dreary desolation; and the road over this horrible plain was distinctly marked by the skeletons of men, camels, and horses abandoned by kafilahs, or by the army that had preceded us. Wherever a foot trod, the surface of the deposit was broken into an impalpable powder, in which there was something peculiarly irritating, and which the lightest wind carried aloft. It was this fine dust settling on the clothes and sticking on the skin that, united with the hot wind, created the thirst that so overpowered everyone.

At sunrise, I rode ahead of the advanced guard, and in the horizon I espied the towers of the little fort where we were to halt. I galloped back to proclaim the joyful news, which spread like wildfire. The men and camp followers cheered up, and even the cattle seemed by a sort of sympathy to understand that relief was at hand, and brightened up a little. At our exhortation, all pressed on, and the people ceased talking,

everyone doing his best to reach the halting-place before the sun got high.

At length the terrible march was over. Immediately the men saw the wells, discipline was at an end, and, before the guards could be told off, the eager multitude made a rush for them, and commenced drawing water, which, notwithstanding its disagreeable taste, they drank in thoughtless haste.

At this place, out of thirty-two wells dug in the bottom of a ravine, only six contained water. One of them was poisoned by an animal which had fallen into it, and of the others, the water was so bitter and brackish that the men said it turned their lotahs black.

The name of this fort was Burshoree, and here we halted for a day. Round the place was a little cultivation; and, amongst other things, some fields of melons and cucumbers. The people flew at these and ate immoderately to quench their raging thirst, for guards had now been put over the wells, the quantity of water in which was so limited, that it had to be served out to officers and men alike, a quart at a time. The consequences of the inconsiderate conduct of the men soon appeared in the fearful form of cholera.

Manning and myself were well off for water, for my behistee, a wiry, active, enterprising

fellow, discovered a small pool formed by a dam across an old water-channel. He immediately filled his bag, emptied it into every available vessel, then ran and got another bag-full, just before the camels and cattle rushed into it, and rendered it undrinkable by stirring up the mud at the bottom.

The double roofs of our tents had proved no adequate protection from the sun, the burning rays of which struck completely through them. Our beds were so hot we could not lie on them to take the rest we so much needed; our only remedy, therefore, was to lie under them, on the ground, or to sit under the table. If we were obliged to sit at table, or anywhere "out in the tent," we kept our hats on. In the evening we struck our tents, and took the inner roof of one and placed it over the inner roof of another, thus interposing three roofs between our heads and the sun, all sitting in the improved tent. Manning and myself had brought in two small tattees; these we put in the doorways. We got some water in the evening from the pool before mentioned, and had the tattees wetted; the tent was cooled, and we got some refreshing sleep.

On the morning of the 31st, Conductor Haveland died of brain-fever, and was buried at sunset. He was ill only three or four hours. Death at this time was rapid in his strides, whether the

victim was European or native. Many cases of brain-fever occurred, and in the evening that most dreaded scourge of the East, cholera, made its appearance.

We marched at ten o'clock on the night of the 31st. It was my tour of duty to command the rear-guard, and, on going over the ground with a small party to hurry off the loiterers, I found several camels dead, with their loads lying beside them, and three poor wretched surwans (camel-drivers) in the last stage of cholera, dying, deserted by their comrades. I could do nothing for them. I had no medicine, no brandy—nothing, in fact; so I sent for the head man of the village, and made the poor creatures over to his charge, with instructions how to treat them. It was all I could do.

At the place where we should have encamped the water was dried up. In order, therefore, to save the men from unnecessary fatigue, the column was halted, and a party of horsemen sent on with two of the guides to search for water in several places where it was anticipated it might be found. After a very long delay, the horsemen returned with a report that water had been found at a place called Hadjee ka Chouk, four miles farther on. This unavoidable addition to our march was attended with fatal consequences. From where we halted to Hadjee ka Chouk, the route of the column was marked by scores of men scattered

along the road, ill and dying from fever, cholera, and sheer exhaustion. A march in our own provinces, during the hot winds, is bad enough, but, compared with this, it is pleasant. The sun was high, and the wind fiercely hot, seemed not only like fire, but stuffy—stifling, as if it could not satisfy the lungs, a feeling caused, I suppose, by the fine impalpable dust with which it was laden. The distress caused by the heat and want of water was terrible, and the cries and entreaties of the poor wretches who, as they sank by the road-side, saw the rear-guard passing, and feared they would be left to die, were most heartrending. Many never rose from the ground where we halted, but quietly died there; others, stricken with fever, struggled on a little farther. The guard behaved nobly, giving to the poor wretches every drop of water they had. It was a small quantity, and did not go far amongst so many, but the act was none the less praiseworthy. Some of the sufferers were fast sinking from fever, and delirious; others appeared to be just seized with cholera; many, exhausted by thirst, and overcome with fatigue, were bitterly bewailing their sad fate, one man striking his breast, and crying out, "Oh, mother! oh, mother! I am dying of thirst in this desert. There is no one to give me a drop of water. Everyone has left me."

A little farther on a man started up, crying out, "Sahib, sahib, for the love of God give me a drop of water; I'll be your slave."

"See, my son, I have not a drop left, but get under the shade of that ash (for there were here and there a few small bushes of a kind of asclepias) and keep quiet. Camp is not far off, and I will send water and people to bring you all on."

"Oh, sahib, be quick, I am just about to die."

My servant, Hyder, came a mile out of camp to meet me with a bottle of tea; I was very grateful to the good fellow, for I was terribly thirsty and needed it much. As soon as I made my report to the commanding officer help was sent back, and we halted a day to bring on all who could be found who were not quite dead. It was melancholy work, and the idea of leaving very many unburied in the wilderness was terrible; but that many may have crawled away and died after hours of lingering torment was worse still.

I cannot describe our sufferings from the heat, the dust, the desert wind, the myriads of flies, and the stench of the dying and dead camels, which rendered our lives intolerable. The heat in our tents rose to 119 degrees; the whole camp smelled like a charnel-house, and in very truth it might be called one, for no person could take three steps in camp, anywhere, without seeing a dead or dying man or animal. There

were a few villages near our camp, this day, with a sprinkling of trees and stunted bushes, and the country was not so desert like, but it had no effect in mitigating the sickness. Lieut. Chalmers had been complaining of his head; the doctor came and prescribed for him, and I gave him the medicine and put him to bed. At one in the morning the doctor called me up; poor Chalmers had a kind of fit, and at two o'clock he died. Mr. Jervis, the merchant, agent, I believe, for Frith & Co., died also this night. Cholera and fever still increasing, and death stalking through the camp. At sunset we buried poor Chalmers and Mr. Jervis.

At one o'clock on the morning of the 3rd of June, we marched to a place called Meerwan, distant four miles. Here was a good-sized pool of water, formed by a dam across a water-channel, filled by the rising of the Indus. Cholera, fever, and sunstroke had hitherto been carrying off their victims, but now another enemy rose up amongst us, and helped still further to thin our ranks. The Desert wind began to blow with increased violence, and this day struck down many of our camp-followers, who were out with the cattle searching for fodder, or watching the camels browsing on the few bare stunted bushes that were here and there making a struggle to exist. Some of the men sank at once as if

struck by some poisonous air, others were brought in alive, but dying fast—quite shrivelled in appearance, as if the hot wind had dried up all the juices in the body. The first to succumb were those who went out without their upper garments; and it is worthy of note that none of the natives of the country ever appeared abroad unless well clothed and with their heads and ears carefully muffled up.

During the day there was a cry of "Belooch, Belooch—they are carrying off our camels." Dressed as we were, in shirt and loose cotton drawers, and with our thick hats on, we snatched up our arms and rushed out, all who were able hurrying off with the nearest picket, and arrived just in time to support some of our troopers who were keeping the marauders at bay. We saved our camels, and the Beloochees went off, some of them severely wounded. The loss of our camels would have been destruction to the convoy.

Returning to camp, I found Lieut. Beaufort attacked by cholera; and Dr. Halloran, who had been unwell the day before, was now down with brain-fever and delirious. The scene in Major Liptrap's tent I shall never forget—it was appalling. Beaufort, suffering all the agonies of cholera, was the colour of lead; Halloran was raving; Liptrap and Manning, both of them speechless and helpless from utter exhaustion,

appeared likewise as if struck with cholera. The hospital havildar (sergeant) came in every few minutes to report some one or two deaths to those who seemed to be dying; and, when he had retired, with the exception of the fierce Desert wind howling through the tents, no sound was to be heard but the groans of the dying or the wail for the dead.

The native doctor came to me about some medicine for Halloran. I went off with him to the hospital, and there, lying on the ground all round the tent, were five or six rows of men, scores of them, in every stage of cholera, fever, and sun-stroke, all moaning for help, all calling for the doctor for the love of God. The tent itself was quite full, and for the moment there was no shelter for the poor creatures lying outside, but arrangements were subsequently made for them.

Returning from the hospital, I found Halloran outside the tent, rushing about, a raving maniac. As force only made him worse, I got a cloth, saturated it in water, cooled it by waving it in the air, folded and then applied it to the nape of his neck and back of his head. He sank back in my arms as quiet as a child, and we laid him down on his bed, from whence he was never moved until he was taken to his grave.

Towards the morning of the 4th, our poor

comrades, Beaufort and Halloran, died. The people in camp were beginning to be so alarmed that it was with difficulty we could get any one to perform the last offices for the dead, and to sew them up in their bedding, the only coffin we could provide. With a little persuasion, however, this object was accomplished, and towards evening they were carried to their graves on the verge of our camp.

The sun, still high above the horizon, looked like a ball of red-hot copper. The fine dust of the Desert, driven across its face by the howling wind, sometimes in streaks, sometimes in clouds, gave to everything a sickly, unearthly appearance; and with little effort of the imagination disease and death might be supposed to be flying on its wings, cutting us off from the pure breath of heaven beyond, and from all hope of escape from this frightful charnel-house.

Our condition became even more hopeless when our only medical man succumbed, and had to be committed to the dust. The two native doctors, good enough men of the old class, were unfit to act without European superintendence. The sepoys, whilst standing round the grave, and seeing the earth thrown upon the doctor's corpse, began to look in each other's faces, and then to steal a glance towards their officers, each man trying to read the other's thoughts, but not

daring to speak his own. There was nothing better to do than to tell the men to look well to their arms, as we expected an attack upon our camp from a large body of Beloochees. A real attack would have been a blessing—anything to prevent the men's minds from brooding over our present position and sinking into despondency.

On the morning of the 5th the quartermaster-sergeant of the 42nd died, and the whole of the people in camp were now so thoroughly alarmed that it was hours before we could, by the offer of very high payment, get anyone, even amongst men accustomed to gain their livelihood by performing the lowest offices, to put the corpse in a sheet and carpet and sew it up.

The heat was as terrible as ever, and the strongest amongst us began to droop. Not only were our actual bodily sufferings great from this cause, and from want of rest and sleep, but our minds were tortured by what we saw around us, and by the fears we naturally entertained for the possible consequences that might ensue to the whole convoy. The thermometer still ranged to 119° in our tents—a heat so fierce that it utterly prevented sleep during the day, and at night, if we did not march, we were kept awake by the groans of our dying, by the roaring of the camels, or by the necessity of attending our sick comrades,

and satisfying the increased demands made by duty; for as death thinned our ranks, or sickness disabled us, an increase of duty fell on our diminished numbers.

During the day several men were brought in, struck down by the Desert wind: of these, one or two were recovered by wrapping them in cloths kept saturated with water; but the majority died. One of the native officers in camp had with him a little girl, his only child, whose mother was dead. She was a pretty, lively, prattling thing, of about six years of age, the delight of everybody. I used to see her every day chattering to her father, helping him to light the fire, and cook their food; and her pretty little ways were delightful to witness. I saw her at ten o'clock all well, and at three p.m. she was dead and laid out for burial. On the night of the 5th we marched again, and in the morning reached the little walled town of Baugh, and the passage of the Desert was accomplished.

We found a detachment of our troops occupying the town, and got some medical aid. All help in the shape of carriage, cattle, and water was sent back to the last dreadful camp, to bring up the sick and dying. The best doctor of all was the complete change of scene, which cheered up everybody. The sight of gardens, green fields, and cultivation, shut out the hideous

vision of the Desert, and tranquillised men's minds. The cooler air, though the difference was but a few degrees, and abundance of clear pure water, refreshed us all; and as with these blessings we could now enjoy that rest and sleep which we so much required, sickness soon disappeared from our camp.

I have not the power to describe in their true colours all the horrors of this march; but what I have said will perhaps convey to the minds of those who may happen to read these volumes, some faint idea of what we endured and went through. The plague of flies, the fierce heat, the raging thirst, the mind tortured by the sight of agonies which we were unable to assuage, and our regret excited by the death of friends and comrades, were some of the miseries which accompanied us in our march across the Desert. To my mind, there are few things so painful as to be compelled to march, or to perform some duty, when the eyelids are heavy, and the body is sinking for want of that rest and sleep which have been long withheld. Such a state predisposes the constitution to cholera and disease of every kind. The exhaustion among our officers was so great that I constantly saw them sit down to dinner in the evening and look at the food, utterly incapable of taking any, or of speaking a single word, until stimulated by two or three glasses of wine; and that did not

always succeed, the result being more frequently a troubled, uneasy sleep.

Every evening, at our little mess, we missed some one from his accustomed place, either from sickness or death; and at such times the thought would rise in our minds, who will be the next? Very often, when overcome by fatigue and languor, by want of rest and sleep, I felt as if I could lie down and die; but the thought that there was one far away, who, while sympathising with his sufferings, eagerly desired to see her husband play the part of a man in the career which lay before him; that there were many hundreds of men in camp who would utterly give way if their officers sank; and still more the solemn consideration that there was an all-wise and overruling Providence, in whose mercy we might trust, kept up my spirits, and enabled me to do my duty throughout the dreadful march.

Every one will naturally ask, how was it that so many camp-followers were allowed to march with the convoy, especially women and children? The latter were chiefly the families of men enlisted into Shah Soojah's service, and were going to join their husbands, who were to remain in the country. Many followers were engaged in various capacities for the bazars of the Shah's and other regiments, for each regiment in Bengal has its bazar, a system that I cannot

explain here. But the greatest number of men who joined the camp were following the army in hopes of employment or plunder. They did not join the convoy at Shikarpoor, or even at Rojhan, where such precautions as were possible had been taken to prevent them, but they preceded the column, and slipping in during the march, were not detected until too late.

Until a regular system is adopted of having all followers numbered and ticketed, and the provost-marshal and his aids are instructed and empowered to flog all men found in camp without tickets, this great source of danger to our armies in India will never be eradicated, but they will continue to be followed by plunderers and villains of all kinds.

CHAPTER VI.

Baugh—Reports that our Kafilah had perished—March—A Large Piece of Water—Air cooled—Rest and Recovery—Dadur—Bolan Pass—Formidable Defile—Quettah—Kojuck Pass—Candahar—Spot in the Sun—Ghuznee—Death of Colonel Herring—Cabool.

THE day we arrived at Baugh, the natives told us that a report had reached them that we had all perished, and that they had believed it, as no one had ever heard of such a thing as a convoy crossing the Desert in the month of June. They also informed us that the people who inhabited that part of the country emigrated to the mountains of Khorassan, and remained there during the hot weather—a fact which at once accounted for the small number of people seen in the few villages near our camp, and for the smallness of the bands of marauders who on several occasions attacked our camels.

We marched on the morning of the 7th, four miles north-east of Baugh, to an immense pool of water, surrounded by low jungle, with villages and fields scattered about the country. The sepoys and camp-followers rushed into the water with shouts of joy, and from that moment every-

one began to mend. In those seven fearful days we had lost six out of the fourteen Europeans in camp, and a hundred sepoys. More than three hundred camp-followers were known to have perished; but as numbers of the latter slyly stole into our camp at Rojhan, contrary to express orders, and in spite of every precaution taken to prevent them, very many more perished who were unknown, and consequently unnoticed. If to this frightful list of mortality are added the great numbers who were taken ill, but eventually recovered, a better estimate will be formed of the horrors I have attempted to describe.

We halted two days at the pool, and as the people had in a great measure recovered, we marched on the 10th at night. We had no sooner moved off the ground than a large party of Beloochees made a dash at our camels, but were very speedily and sharply repulsed, for our men were now quite up to their work, all the sick having been left behind at Baugh. As we drew nearer to the hills, these attacks became more frequent, and though we lost a few camels, the Beloochees, in several engagements, were handled very severely, and our cavalry always brought in a few of the marauders' heads.

On the 12th we reached Dadur, a small walled

town at the entrance to the celebrated Bolan Pass. As we approached the town we crossed two beautiful clear sparkling streams, running between fields of cotton-plants in full bloom. The sight of the water and the odour of fresh fields revived our spirits so much that we felt as if we had stepped out of the valley of Death into the garden of Eden, and we continued our march with renewed hope and in good spirits.

Dadur was garrisoned by a wing of the 31st N.I., holding the fort to keep open the communication with Baugh, and to form a depôt for stores to be sent through the pass, and as a strong post to keep it open. Here we halted fifteen days, waiting for orders for our advance. This unnecessary delay was most cruel for Manning and myself, who were anxious to join our regiments with the army under Lord (then Sir John) Keane, and share in the perils and glory of the campaign. By this detention we should miss everything. If we had marched at once to Quettah, just through the Bolan Pass, we should have got into a cool climate; and whilst the army halted at Candahar, we should have been in a position to reach it with any party of horse who might be going to join.

At length the order for the march of the convoy arrived, and on the 27th we advanced towards the pass. The first march was considered to be

one of the most dangerous. The ground was broken into little low rounded hills, with grassy glades between them; and here and there were narrow passes between the hills, affording many suitable places where the enemy might post ambuscades, from whence their horse could make a sudden dash at our unavoidably straggling files of camels, and then effect a rapid and successful retreat through the maze. We saw, in fact, large hordes of Beloochee horsemen in the distance, evidently on the look-out for an opening to pounce down on us; but whether deterred by the precautions taken, or by other motives unknown to us, they did not venture an attack. But though they did not actually at any time come to close quarters with us, they harassed us considerably by constantly hovering about—now on our flanks, now on the rear; approaching occasionally a little closer to pick up a load of grain or an abandoned camel, or to cut off a straggler. Thus, by obliging us to take extra precautions during the march, sending our flankers right and left to crown the heights, as it was called, or to examine suspicious places, then halting to let the rear close up, or to make a demonstration against the Beloochees when they ventured too near, or showed more boldly and openly than we thought right, they added many hours to our march, and kept the baggage-cattle laden for an unusual length

of time. Their very vicinity was embarrassing, by keeping us constantly on the *qui-vive;* and the hourly expectation of an attack night and day made the duty very heavy.

. As we got more into the hills, where the sun's rays were concentrated by the narrow stony valleys, the thermometer in the shade rose to 117° during the day, and at night stood at 95°. The heat was almost as great as in the Desert; but as we had no dust, and there was plenty of clear, cool, sparkling water, its effect was not so severely felt by us. The mortality amongst the cattle, however, was very great, the consequence of the weakening influence of long-continued want of sufficient food, added to the great heat and extra fatigue. The army and the several convoys that had preceded us had eaten up everything within reach. A camel going along the road would suddenly stop and sit down—a position from which it was found impossible to raise him again, and he was consequently abandoned. It was a common saying amongst the natives, when a camel thus sat down, "His heart is broken." I have known them die on the spot in a few minutes, and I have known them live for days, eating all the grass around them, and then dying without having had strength to rise from the spot where they had first sat down. I subsequently found out that a gill of good

spirit, mixed with twice as much water, poured down the beast's throat, would get him up after his load had been removed for a short time; and that if unworked, and fed with good food mixed with warming spice, he would perfectly recover in ten or fifteen days. But the whole system of loading is bad: the saddles are very rude, clumsy, and difficult to pack, and are perfect instruments of torture to the poor ill-treated animals.

We commenced our second march at night, when the moon rose, and at two in the morning we came to one of the most formidable defiles I ever saw. At the end of a long, narrow, stony level, surrounded by high receding hills, rose a perpendicular and apparently solid wall of rock, out of which flowed a good-sized stream. The rock was several hundred feet high, and appeared to join together the ranges of hills bounding the valley. A halt was here ordered, and strong flanking parties were sent up the heights on either side to see that all was clear, or to attack and drive off any Beloochees who might be manning the pass.

When our flankers had got on the hills above the pass, they found all right, and we moved on. As the long column advanced, the wall of rock seemed to swallow it up, and it was not until some of our flankers appeared on the precipice right over the pass, and we approached within

a score yards of it, that, by the bright but uncertain light of the moon, the opening became visible. We then discovered that the pass was shut out from view by taking a turn to the right round the nearest rock, which, shooting up to the height of two hundred and fifty feet, overhung its base so much that it seemed to be toppling over, and made the rivulet appear as if flowing out of it.

The entrance to the pass and the whole of the valley were strewn with large boulders and detached rocks, between which the little stream flowed, clear and sparkling, with a pleasant rippling sound. It was a beautiful night. The moon was at the full, the sky clear and cloudless, and every stone and boulder, every tuft of grass and stunted bush scattered here and there, was distinctly visible, the flood of moonlight throwing the whole into grand masses of light and shade.

During the halt, the camp-followers had gathered a quantity of dried sticks, grass, and weeds, and in the bend of the pass, where there was a retired corner looking black as night, and under the shade of the boulders outside the defile, they lighted fires, for the ascent had been considerable and the air was now very chill. Round these fires clustered groups of soldiers, who, as they stood or reclined in every

sort of attitude, all gesticulating with great animation as they conversed together, formed, in their various costumes—for we had men of several races going to join the army—a most picturesque and remarkable spectacle.

The scene altogether was one that may be better imagined than described. The flanking parties on the ridge of the hills stood out clear against the sky, some looking down from the rocks overhanging the pass; the long column of soldiers was traced by the flash of their arms glittering in the moonlight, and the gaunt figures of the camels were seen moving on with their silent unearthly pace; the parties of horsemen, with long bright matchlocks over their shoulders, or tall spears in their hands, were scattered about, some dismounted, taking a whiff at their hookah by a fire, others moving slowly on with the camels; while crowds of camp-followers and people, all laden with burdens of one description or another, were seen crossing the stream in several places, and then vanishing in the gloomy pass. The fitful glare of the fires tinged with red the bronze-coloured faces grouped around, or was reflected by the stream, driven up in spray by the cattle dashing through. The grand rocks forming the defile were at the same time just sufficiently lighted up to show their immensity, and to intensify the gloom beyond.

The flanking parties on the ridge twice fired several shots, and some advanced a few paces, as if they saw the enemy. This caused a temporary excitement, and while all stood to their arms, there was a sudden silence, every one listening for the next shots, which were to assure them of the presence of a foe, or looking at the parties of men stationed on the ridge. As no additional shots were fired, and no signal of danger was given by the men on the look-out, confidence was restored, and the usual hubbub commenced again, increasing tenfold as the cattle and people became massed at the mouth of the pass in apparently inextricable confusion, each waiting his turn to get through a narrow place by which only a single file of camels could pass at a time.

A few hundred yards farther on the pass became wider, but from the spurs of the hills interlacing, it was so tortuous, that we had to cross the stream twenty-one times. Such a position would not be easily forced, if well defended by an active and resolute enemy.

The fourth march brought us to a place called Ab-i-goom, the lost river or water—a great natural curiosity—a beautiful, clear, bright stream, some twenty feet wide and eighteen inches deep, rushing rapidly past a point of rock in front of our camp, suddenly sinking

amongst the pebbles, and disappearing entirely, like our own

"Sullen Mole that runneth underneath."

As soon as I was off duty, I shouldered my gun and went out to look at this curious phenomenon, the explanation of which I soon discovered. Below our camp, at the other side of the Ab-i-goom, was a lofty perpendicular bank, composed of alternate layers of hard clay and rolled pebbles. The clay on our side of the river lying immediately beneath the pebbles, and very near the surface, had been quite washed away, and the stream, sinking down into the underlying stratum of pebbles, pursued its course among them.

The next march was short, but the ascent steep, and towards morning we got into a fine cool climate. Whilst the camp was being marched out, I spread my horse-cloth on a heap of stones on the flank of the company I was with, lay down, and in half a minute was fast asleep. I did not waken until half-past eight, when I found myself in the middle of the camp, close to my tent, and Hyder shouting at me that breakfast was ready. This sleep was the sweetest I ever enjoyed. Sir-e-Bolan, the head of the Bolan Pass, of which I have this agreeable reminiscence, is several thousand feet above the level of the sea, and the climate is delightfully cool.

Pursuing our march, we soon reached Quettah, and found ourselves in a country where, in exchange for the furnace of that frightful desert, we enjoyed a climate almost as cool as that of England in summer. Cattle were grazing everywhere; and the hill-sides were covered with sheep. We looked around on turfy plains, orchards of apples, plums, apricots and mulberries, gardens, fields of clover, and vineyards. In the fields, our sight was gratified by the appearance of all sorts of English weeds and flowers growing in abundance. We met plenty of friends and comrades, who received us with hearty congratulations on our merciful preservation through all the horrors of the Desert.

Almost the first thing that attracted our attention was the sheep—large animals with fine long-wooled fleeces of a rich brown colour. The tails, however, which were just large masses of fat, the size of a man's head, were the great curiosity. There was a capital story afloat in camp, at the time of our arrival, relative to these said caudal extremities. A lot of these sheep, purchased by the commissariat, having been brought into camp to be slaughtered for the soldiers, two Irishmen stood regarding them with wonder and astonishment.

"Holy Mother, Larry, how do they get them big tails?" exclaimed one of them.

"Aisy enough, Paddy, my boy; don't you see they do always be grazing up hill, and by coorse the fat runs down into their tails?"

After halting two days to relieve the escort and make other arrangements, we started again, Colonel Stacey commanding. Of the few survivors of the horrors of the Desert, only Captain Manning and myself went on. General Nott, who commanded at Quettah, particularly desired that, unless in case of necessity, Manning and myself should not be put on duty until we reached Candahar. This would give us fourteen days to recruit; and we much needed it. Manning, in particular, was much reduced in strength. Our march was comparatively quiet enough until we entered the low hills leading to the Kojack Pass. As these hills began to draw together, parties of Beloochees were seen going in the direction of the pass; and as the ascent became steeper, and the road to the defile narrower, small bodies of them began to line the hill-tops. I was with the rear-guard that day, riding with the officer commanding it. As we drew near to our camp, at the foot of the great ascent, the hills drew in so close to each other, that their tops were within easy rifle range. Hundreds of Beloochees were seen sitting on the ridges, looking apparently at the convoy and troops, as they passed by. As we went along, however, a sound in

which I detected cause for suspicion reached my ear, and borrowing the officer's telescope, I saw several men loading their juzzails (a kind of long heavy rifle).

"Look out!" I at once exclaimed; "we shall be attacked. I saw the fellows loading their juzzails; we shall get it hot and strong; there are hundreds of heads peeping up over the ridge."

These words were scarcely out of my mouth when a shot was fired at us, almost immediately followed by another, and in a moment the balls began to whistle about our ears. As camp, however, was not far off, the officer commanding begged me to ride on and report the matter to Colonel S——, and ask him to send assistance. I at once assented, and riding in, reported the matter to the colonel, who laughed in my face at the idea of an attack being made so near the camp. He had not heard the first shots, for, the pass turning at right angles, the sound was carried away; nor, the place where our camp was pitched being out of sight, had he seen the flash of the fire. Whilst, however, I was urging him to send assistance, the yelling of the enemy, re-echoed by the hills, and the sound caused by the discharge of their fire-arms, were distinctly heard by us, and numbers of wounded began to drop in. Rushing to my tent, and getting my gun and pouch, off I went in all haste to my friend in

the rear-guard, followed by two companies sent by the colonel. When I got back the firing had become very heavy, the hill-sides were alive with numbers of the enemy, and hundreds were down in the road, if road it could be called, some firing at us as hard as they could, whilst others were trying to break open the boxes, and cutting open the bags that had fallen with the camels, that they might carry off everything they could. The boxes could not be abandoned, for they contained valuable stores; but the rear-guard was obliged to leave them, and had drawn off a little towards camp, firing and retiring very coolly, though they were hard pressed, the enemy being stationed in great numbers on the hills on the right, left, and rear, and every ball telling, for the Beloochees, resting their long juzzails on the rocks, fired at us with impunity, with deliberate and deadly aim.

There were some short thick trees in the pass, and the Beloochees had crept on from tree to tree, until many of them were very near to us. I was behind one of them, a little in advance of our men, using my gun with effect, when some one called to me to "look out." Turning half round, I perceived behind the next tree, four paces off, a Belooch with his sword drawn. As I was loading at the moment, and had not seen the man, I was therefore unprepared for him, and in

a second he would have been on me, when, fortunately, a well-directed shot from behind rolled him over.

While a considerable number of the enemy, sword in hand, were inciting each other to make a rush at and destroy the infidels, the two companies came up. This assistance arrived just in the nick of time, for our men were dropping fast, and matters were looking ugly. The enemy were every moment increasing in numbers, and those on the hill-sides seemed inclined to cut us off from the camp, an exploit for which they had worked themselves up to the necessary pitch of boldness, when the officer commanding the two companies, getting into the position he wished, suddenly wheeled his men into line, and, with a loud cheer, charged the enemy in the road. The sight of the sharp bayonets within a few paces of them, and the firm, unwavering line of our men coming at the double, was too much for the Beloochees, who immediately broke and fled, scaling the precipitous hills like cats. Our united force now faced right and left, and opening a steady fire, brought down dozens of them. Other reinforcements at the same time coming in from camp, the Beloochees abandoned the ridge of the hills and drew off, while we got the stores into camp, and were no further annoyed, our friends having had enough.

The Kojack was, in one respect, more easy than the Bolan Pass, inasmuch as it was more open, and less favourable for attacks by the enemy; still it was a stiff ascent, and proved more difficult for the cattle, which it tried severely.

With the exception of a small cavalry affair at Killa Fatoolla, we reached Candahar without annoyance. The day before arriving at that city, a party of horsemen had been sent to meet us with letters and papers, and I was greeted with two large baskets of fruit, sent by Captain Wyndham, of my regiment, who had been left at Candahar on duty. The basket contained grapes, peaches, apricots, plums, greengages, nectarines, figs, mulberries, apples and pears, and a letter, giving an account of the fall of Ghuznee, the news of which had arrived the day before. This was a great blow to our expectations, for as we had all calculated on a siege, we had hoped to arrive in time to share the danger, the honour, and the prize-money. We found ourselves, indeed, in a land flowing with milk and honey, but too late for the honour and glory we coveted. We were consoled, however, by hearing of the dashing way in which our gallant army had, in twenty-four hours, stormed and taken what was considered the impregnable bulwark of Affghanistan. The Ameer, Dost Mahomed, calculated that we should be detained

before this fortress until winter set in, when the cold would destroy us.[1]

The fall of Ghuznee was not at first believed by the Ameer and his councillors, but when it became fully known it sent a shudder through the heart of every Affghan, and showed them the hopelessness of resistance.

At Candahar our escort was again changed for the 37th N.I., under command of that most excellent and lamented officer, Colonel Herring. The march to Cabool was without interruption, for the fear of us had fallen on the whole country, and but for one tragic event the journey would have been a perfect party of pleasure, the climate being delightful, supplies good and abundant, the roads easy, and everything new and strange.

On arriving at Ghuznee we all snatched a hasty meal, and then rushed off to visit the scene of the heroic exploits of our gallant army, and to see our wounded comrades. We found that the ruins of the gate and gateway, which had been blown in, had been removed, and every precaution taken, that the manœuvre by which the fort was gained should not be played off against ourselves.

The fort of Ghuznee is built on a rocky

[1] I am obliged to omit all notice of Candahar. My sketch-book was unfortunately destroyed by fire, with my notes and journals, and of the letters I wrote to my wife and friends nearly all miscarried at the time. My sketch and notes of Ghuznee were destroyed also.

mound at the end of a range of hills; it consists of an enceinte of lofty walls and bastions, and where the walls come down on the plain is covered by a deep ditch and fausse braye. The citadel is on the highest part of the mound, which is scarped away all round. Access to it is obtained only by one road, which is well flanked, so as to bring a heavy cross-fire on any assailants who might penetrate so far.

The survey we took of the whole place convinced us that but for the brilliant thought of blowing open the gate, and the gallant and successful execution of that thought, we must either have besieged the place with very inadequate means, or we must have gone on to Cabool to meet and attack the "Dost," leaving this strong fort, with its large garrison, in our rear—a most perilous move, from which the genius of Captain Thomson, of the Bengal Engineers, saved us. Our comrades and the wounded generally were doing well, and, though a bitter feeling of disappointment would steal over our minds at having been too late for the dashing, bold exploit, yet it was subdued by exultation at the fame our army had won.

We halted one day at Ghuznee, and then moved on, each succeeding day's march being more and more pleasant as we ascended into a climate more resembling that of Europe.

I do not know whether it was noticed in India, but, during part of the months of August and September this year (1839), there was a very large spot in the sun visible to the naked eye. It was pear-shaped, and we saw it every morning of our march, very distinct, when the sun rose. I cannot positively say that this phenomenon was the cause of any atmospheric disturbances, but it is very certain that the winter at Cabool this year was unusually severe, the frost being exceedingly intense, and the snow-storms unusually heavy. Perhaps some of our astronomers may have made a note of the solar phenomenon, if it was visible in England, and may have observed what influence it had on the weather.

Our march from Ghuznee to Cabool, as I said before, was perfectly uninterrupted. The fear of us had fallen on the whole country. As soon as the news reached Cabool that the bulwark of Affghanistan, the "impregnable Ghuznee," was taken, the army of the Ameer, Dost Mahomed, dispersed at once, and the Ameer himself fled, for, as the people said, "Who could stand before the dreaded English?"

After ascending the slight pass at Huft Asya, we descended into a long and fertile valley, bounded by hills on our right and left. The Wurduk Valley produces the finest wheat in Affghanistan, and its inhabitants are so celebrated for

making bread, that the "nān-i-Wurduk" (Wurduk bread) has become prevalent as a proverb.

The range of hills on our right separated us from this valley, the nearest point of contact with which is at a place called Hyder Khail, where, from the top of the hill, the whole of it is visible. On an elevation of the ridge over Hyder Khail were a dozen or more of enormous upright stones, evidently planted there for some commemorative purpose. We could not, however, learn their history at the time, nor did we make any particular efforts to do so; the catastrophe of the day drove all thought of them out of our heads.

The guide that was sent with us from Ghuznee, a Lohanee, a man of some substance as a trader in India, told Colonel Herring that from the ridge he could see the whole of the Wurduk Valley; and, as the colonel's curiosity was as much excited by the desire to see the stones as by the promised view of the valley, he determined on making the ascent in the afternoon, as soon as the business of the day was concluded. The stones were in a position immediately above our camp, the ascent to which, only one thousand feet, was rendered easy by a spur of the hill coming down to the left, offering a gradual incline.

In the afternoon, the colonel, with Captain Rind, Lieutenants Carlyon and Hawtry, and

attended by his two orderlies, set out on the expedition. I was on duty in the camp, but as I happened to pass Captain Wyndham's tent, seeing him and others eagerly watching the progress of the ascending party, I followed their example. When the party was within a short distance of the top of the hill, they sat down to rest and take breath on some rounded stones or rocks projecting from the hill side; after which they started again. When they were fairly clear of the rocks on which they had been seated, and had advanced about twenty steps, suddenly out rushed from behind each of those upright stones jets of white smoke, followed by a faint report, which came from a party of Affghans, who, sword or knife in hand, rushed on our comrades with loud and savage yells. The latter, unprepared for such an attack, turned and ran down the hill. Colonel Herring stumbled and could only limp, and one of the Affghans overtook him. The colonel turned, seized him by the throat, and bent him over one of the rocks close at hand, pounding him with his stick. At this moment another Affghan came behind and drew his long heavy knife over the colonel's loins, and in an instant he was hacked to pieces.

All this was the work of a moment, but meanwhile we had not been idle. Every looker-on, as soon as he witnessed the treacherous attack;

rushed to the rear-guard, and the men, snatching up their arms, all set off at a run. We found Lieutenant Carlyon at the foot of the hill, concealed in a small bush, with terrible long spines. The remainder of the unfortunate party soon joined us in safety, and we hastened up the hill, hoping to find the colonel alive, for the Affghans, seeing the guard coming, had bolted instantly.

It was our melancholy lot, however, to discover only his dead body—an awful sight, hacked and mangled in the most frightful manner, with every vestige of his clothing torn off except the wristbands of his shirt. The body was nearly severed at the loins, and there was a dreadful gash across the chest and through the ribs, exposing the cavity. There were altogether sixteen or seventeen wounds, each sufficient to cause death.

With heavy hearts and reverent care, we brought down the poor remains of him we had seen in health and spirits only a few moments before. We swathed his body up, and laid it in a dooly, to be carried into Cabool for burial with such honours as befitted his rank.

The colonel was greatly beloved, for he was a kind-hearted man, courteous and just to all, and a most excellent and talented officer. His death in this miserable way was the more lamentable, for it was the result of over-confidence in the Affghans; his noble heart never dreamt of treachery.

Not one of the party was armed; even the colonel's orderlies had their muskets unloaded. Had it been otherwise, and if they had shown front for two minutes, the colonel would have been saved, for the Affghans fled the moment they saw our guard. The sad event was the more mortifying, too, from the circumstance that a delay in camp of a few minutes would have saved him, and in all probability the party would not have started, for they had scarcely commenced the ascent when a despatch came for the colonel, offering him the command of "the Shah's Contingent," a most responsible and lucrative appointment, and he would necessarily have stayed to reply to it. Our pursuit of the Affghans was now useless, as they were already at the bottom of the hill, and beyond the reach of our shot.

At length, on the 8th of September, we marched into Cabool, delivered over the treasure and what stores we had brought, and joined our respective brigades, encamped on the Peshawer side of the city, at a place called "Siah Sung" (black rock).

I found my regiment brigaded with H.M. 13th, now Prince Albert's Light Infantry, and the 37th N.I., and made my first call on our brigadier, then colonel, and subsequently the famous Sir Robert Sale. I was very glad

indeed to see my old comrades, and was most kindly and heartily welcomed by them.

To an officer, his regiment is home and family, and in it ties of friendship are formed that death alone can sever. Hardships undergone, battles fought side by side, wounds, sickness, and suffering, all the great and varied trials of a soldier's life, endured together, only strengthen the bonds that are thus formed.

I should not omit to mention that, of the five thousand camels that composed the kafilah we escorted from Shikarpoor, only five hundred arrived at Cabool, the rest having either perished or been abandoned on the road.

CHAPTER VII.

Cabool—Baber's Tomb—"Syle"—Left in Garrison at Cabool—Quarters: for Men, for Officers—Winter Clothing—H. M. 13th and the 35th N.I.—Guard-mounting and Wonder of Caboolees—Sliding—Skating—Astonishment of Caboolees—Christmas Eve—A "Big Snow"—Move into Camp—Build a Hut—March to Bameean—Zohauk—Action with Dost Mohammed—Syghan and Fort of Sir-i-Sung—Return to Bameean—The Great Idol—Skeleton of a Dragon—Return to Cabool.

CABOOL is built between two hills; the southern and larger one the end of a considerable range, the northern smaller and detached. High and strong battlemented stone walls, with large bastions at regular intervals, run over the crest of both hills, and effectually secure the city from any sudden incursion of an enemy, or the attacks of the Gilzaees, the most turbulent tribe in the whole country, against whom these walls were principally erected.

The walls are well built, and on the eastern side, where they come down to the plain and the slope of the hill is easier, the wall is double, and sometimes even triple. At the eastern side of the town is the Bala Hissar, or citadel, the

upper part of which is built on a rocky eminence, the end of a spur from the southern hill. It overlooks the lower part, which is built round its base, and is fortified with stone walls and bastions, besides a deep wide ditch filled by a stream from the mountains. Between the ditch and the walls is a wide berm, on the edge of which is a thick clay parapet, to protect the base of the stone walls from cannon shot, and for other defensive purposes. It was partly ruinous when we were at Cabool. In the centre is the eastern or Lahore gate.[1] A little above, to the left, are seen a portion of the wall and two bastions of the Upper Hissar; the left bastion was partly destroyed by an earthquake. Above the right bastion of the Upper Hissar is a little tower, on a point of rock just above the city, which lies to the right. This tower is called the Koolla Feringhee, or Englishman's hat, from some fancied resemblance to that ugly article of masculine attire. The mountain to the left, joining the city hill, terminates in a peak, on which is a platform of stone, raised by the sovereigns of the country, and here during the summer-time they occasionally resort on Friday (their Sunday), "buraee syle," on parties of pleasure. In a curve at the base of the city hill, a little beyond the furthest bastion

[1] This description refers to the vignette.

to the extreme left, is the Armenian burial-ground, where Colonel Herring and many of our officers were laid to rest.

The very first thing that arrests the eye of the stranger, both at Candahar and Cabool, is the women, like so many corpses wandering about in their grave-clothes. When a lady, or woman of the smallest pretension to respectability, prepares to leave her house on any errand, she throws over her head a long white cotton garment made something like a surplice, that covers her from her head to half way below the knee. Over her feet and legs she draws white gaiters, large and loose, which are tied below the knee by embroidered garters. Her feet she thrusts into common high-heeled shoes, and to hide her face she fastens round her head a long veil, which reaches nearly to her knees, made of the same thick white cotton cloth as the first-mentioned garment. To enable her to see, there is an oblong opening in the veil opposite her eyes, and to prevent them being seen it is crossed by open needle-work. The women are thus so completely disguised that it is utterly impossible for any man to recognise his own wife or daughter, even on the closest inspection. The opportunities the use of this garment gives for intrigue may be imagined, and the women of Cabool are

so celebrated for loose morals, that their immorality has risen into a proverb. But if the women in this respect are bad, the men are ten times worse. Every sin, every crime of which human nature can be guilty, from those for which the "cities of the plain" were overthrown in the days of Lot, to murder, robbery, and violence, are as common and notorious as daylight, throughout Affghanistan.

There is only one building in Cabool worth mention—the tomb of the Emperor Baber. This is a handsome edifice of white marble, built in the usual Eastern style, with a central room or rooms, with an arched corridor or verandah all round, and with rooms at each corner of the corridor. The arches are very graceful, and the whole building is beautiful, though far inferior to the celebrated tombs in India, and having the disadvantage of being greatly disfigured, in consequence of having been split in several places by the action of earthquakes. The situation of the tomb, however, adds greatly to its beauty. It stands on the upper terrace of a garden, many feet above the level of the valley, to the west of Cabool, immediately under the city Hill, which there rises abruptly to the height of several hundred feet. The garden is filled with flowering trees and shrubs, the dark

green of whose foliage throws out the whiteness of the marble, and prevents the building from being dwarfed by the height of the hill behind. In front of the tomb is a small stone basin, about ten yards square. A small brook from the hill flows through the tomb, fills the basin, and makes its way out at the further side, falling in a small cascade to the next terrace, whence it is led over the garden for the purposes of irrigation. Round the basin are some gigantic plane-trees, forming a complete canopy, impervious to the rays of the sun.

This spot was the scene of many a picnic during my time. A complete view was obtained of the whole valley and the Lughmān hills beyond. It was delightful to sit under the shade of these grand old trees, and let the eye range over the valley, studded with forts and villages, and filled with gardens, fields, orchards, and vineyards, running far up the slope of the mountains opposite, until it was impossible to tell where cultivation ceased. On one or two occasions our picnics were disagreeably interrupted by a shot from the city hill, fired by some fanatic Mahomedan, to show his hatred of the infidel. As no damage, however, was done, we did not much mind it.

"Syle" is a comprehensive word with the

Caboolees, and means generally pleasuring, or a party of pleasure, and all that can be included under these terms, from taking your family out into the country for the day, or strolling out a few hours by yourself, to sitting with a companion on a wall under the shade of a tree, and drinking a bottle of strong Rakhi. A syle I one day witnessed, and was invited to share. The word, as will be seen hereafter, comprehends something else not so pleasant.

A short distance from the city is a royal apple orchard, many acres in extent; and when the trees are in blossom, the Caboolees resort to it on Friday (their Sunday), many of them taking their families with them, to roam about, lie under the trees, or sit in groups, listening to professional story-tellers. They select four trees, stretch round them large pieces of cloth, forming an enclosure six feet high, within which the women cook the dinner, and enjoy the sweet fresh air of spring, not forgetting to observe what is going on all around; for though they cannot be seen, they can see perfectly through the cloth wall. When the cooking is over, and the meal eaten, they put on their veils; the cloth is taken down, and they stroll about. To this garden resort, of course, cooks and sweetmeat-sellers; men with dried fruits, with milk, cream, and

curds; vendors of sherbet and ices; and, in fact, of anything and everything that is eatable and drinkable. In all directions cabābs are frizzling, meats are cooking, and men are calling out nān (bread), nān-i-Wurduk (Wurduk bread), nān-i-sheereen (sweet cake), āb (water), āb-i-koonuk (cold water). Nor are toys for the children forgotten. In fact, it is a regular fair, and altogether a very pretty and curious sight.

In October, the cold began to be very severe. Ice formed on the puddles by the road-side, to the great amazement of the sepoys, who, except when made artificially, had never seen it before. Shah Soojah, with his court, went down to the usual winter residence of the sovereigns at Jellalabad, while Lord Keane, with the head-quarters of the army of the Indus, and the greatest portion of the troops, returned to our own provinces. By an order, dated 9th of October, 1839, H. M. 13th Light Infantry and my own regiment were left to garrison Cabool. All necessary arrangements were made for our accommodation in the Bala Hissar. The King's Palace, an extensive but poor building, was made over to the soldiers of the 13th; and the large range of royal stables were turned into barracks, and fitted up for the men of my regiment, and a tight fit they were. Each man had a space of about six inches

more than his own length to lie in, and the breadth was limited to the length of his bayonet; but as numbers were always on duty, we thus generally obtained a few inches more room.

The king's garden and two garden-houses were assigned as quarters for the officers of the 13th and ourselves. Very pleasant quarters they were; but as they were not large enough to hold us all, many officers were obliged to hire houses in the bazaar near the barracks. The two garden-houses are counterparts of each other. The bank and embattled walls shown in the frontispiece are part of the Upper Hissar. The large bastion forms its north-east angle, and the entrance gateway is seen to the left. The walls of the garden and the parapet of the house are split, the result of frequent earthquakes. The two houses are divided into a centre and two wings; the centre has rooms on the ground, and above is a fine open hall used as a drawing-room in summer. On each side of this hall in the wings are three tiers of chambers, the windows of which are closed by wooden shutters, made in small panels of two and three inches square, worked into geometrical patterns. These are pretty and picturesque, but not exactly adapted to the transmission of light. A stream of water comes

through the lower centre chamber, fills a little square basin on the terrace in front of the house, and from thence flows through the garden. On the other side of the wall were the barracks of my regiment.

Our first care, on getting into our apartments, was to make fireplaces and glass windows. As glass was very scarce in the town, we could only put in four or five panes—but this was better than total darkness. Glass windows being until this time unknown in Cabool, we enlightened the Caboolees, at the same time that we lighted our apartments.

I found that it was impossible to make a fireplace and chimney in my room, and was obliged, therefore, to have recourse to the Affghan notion of a fire—a sundullee. This is a low four-legged stool or small table, eighteen inches high, under which is placed a pan of red-hot charcoal, with a thickly-wadded cotton quilt of large size thrown over the whole. People sit round the sundullee, and draw the quilt up, by which means no heat can escape before it comes in contact with the limbs. As the natives all sit on the ground, a good number can share in the warmth, and it is really a very effectual plan.

The walls of our rooms were very neatly orna-

mented, in a simple and effective manner, that might be copied with advantage in England. All round the door and windows there was a raised moulding on the wall, about three inches broad. Whilst the plaster was wet, a pretty pattern was impressed on it by a wooden stamp, and it was then dusted over with pounded talc, which glitters and looks quite bright and shining. In some of the rooms the walls were divided by this moulding into panels, which were painted with light blue, green, or grey. This threw out the moulding, and heightened its brilliancy. Sometimes there were raised figures of flowers in the panel, covered with the glittering talc, and the ground was coloured in such a way as to throw the figures into high relief, producing an effect which was very pleasing.

As the winter drew on, the men were furnished with sheep-skin coats, warm gloves, and quilts. Each soldier and sepoy had a neem-chu (sheep-skin coat), reaching to mid thigh, and for each sentry was provided a poshteen (sheep-skin coat, reaching to the ankles). When the sentry was relieved, he handed over his orders and his poshteen, which, during the winter, was thus passed on from sentry to sentry.

The Caboolees were all wonder at our various proceedings, and numbers used to flock into the

Bala Hissar to see what we were about. The sight that attracted the greatest crowds was grand guard-mounting in the palace square on Monday mornings. The regularity with which everything was conducted, the silence, discipline, and order of the men, their simultaneous movements, their firm united step, and the music of the band, astonished and delighted them. The relief of the sentries, the way in which the men were lodged and cared for by the officers, the hospital arrangements, were all matter of wonder, and extorted many a Yā Allāh!

From the day on which we entered the Bala Hissar may be dated the great friendship which existed between the soldiers of the 13th and the men of my regiment, a friendship that became quite romantic. My attention was first drawn to the fact, of the excellent terms on which they were, by seeing the way in which the men got on together when on duty. Our guards were all mixed, as many sepoys and havildars (native sergeants) as soldiers and sergeants. One day, going out riding, I passed the guard at the Lahore gate at one o'clock, when the sergeant was getting his dinner; I saw the havildar take command of the relief party of the 13th and relieve the sentries, who conducted themselves as steadily as if the colonel had been looking on, or as if the havildar had been their own ser-

geant. And this was always the case when the sergeant of a guard was getting his meals. The native sergeant took command of the mixed relief party over the English corporal, and the men were as steady as possible, the soldiers treating the sepoys quite as comrades.

In December the cold was very great; so, for exercise, and to keep ourselves warm, we made a slide under the shade of the garden walls, at which all hands used to take a turn, enjoying it as much as if we had been a parcel of lads. But in a short time the Caboolee boys found it out, and completely took the shine out of us by the wonderful antics they played in sliding. They would turn round and round, changing feet as they whirled about, go on one leg, put the toe of the other foot up to their chin, and perform all sorts of manœuvres; so shaming us that we never went on the slide again.

In the course of a few days, however, the Bala Hissar ditch froze over and would bear, and then came our triumph. We appeared in skates manufactured by ourselves, and figured away on the ice to the utter amazement of the Cabool people, who, women as well as men, as they had never previously seen such a spectacle, came running together to witness the performance.

"Ya ullāh een chee tour yukh mulluk ust," they exclaimed—(What sort of sliding is this?)

"You don't stop; you go on and turn, and round and round. You don't take a run and slide as we do. What have you got on your feet? Ujub!—wonderful!"

They bit the fingers of amazement!

The cold became very intense, and on the 20th of December the thermometer, hung out in the sun, just before it set behind the Bala Hissar, stood at freezing-point. Ten minutes after he had sunk behind the hill the quicksilver dropped fifteen degrees, and just before Christmas-day it went down to zero. But the winter was *yet* to come.

On Christmas-eve I was on main-guard duty, and at eight o'clock was sitting with my sub beside a comfortable fire, enjoying a cigar, when in came the sergeant of the guard with the keys, and oh, delightful sight! his cap and shoulders covered with snow.

"Why, sergeant, is it snowing?"

"Yes, your honour, as big as it can snow."

Out we rushed to see a sight that reminded us of Old England. It was, indeed, a "big snow;" there were twenty-four inches of it on the ground next morning. The snow made our rounds at night very dangerous work. We had fully two and a half miles to go to visit all the guards, and in some places along the lofty walls the rampart was only two feet wide, while it

was twenty feet high. It generally took us two hours to go round and visit all the guards, groping our way through the snow as carefully as we could.

On Christmas-day we all dined with the officers of H.M.'s 13th, and on New Year's-day they dined with us; but though our fare was plain, and instead of wine we had only rations of commissariat rum, which in taste and appearance much resembled distilled leather, we were merry enough. The cold increased from day to day; at night, on the 1st of January, the quicksilver sunk into the bulb of the thermometer. In the beginning of January, hearing that the lake three miles from the city was frozen over, we made a party, took our guns, skates, and luncheon, and went out there. It was frozen from end to end, with the exception of three pools in the centre, which were covered with wild fowl. There were some Affghans on the shore, ensconced behind walls of snow, waiting for a chance shot at a duck. They were, as usual, astonished at our skating, but when I went between the two nearest pools, and shot right and left a brace of birds that were flying over the lake, their amazement was beyond all bounds. They looked at the birds, then at my double gun, a toy in comparison with the six-foot "shooting-irons," measured the distance, and ended by begging a little

powder, which I daresay they thought would shoot straight as well as strong. One day an Affghan, who was lying in wait behind a wall of snow on the bank of a brook, in the middle of which he had anchored two sham decoy-ducks, asked me for a charge of powder for his gun, which he had discharged. I gave him what he called a charge, which was just a handful, all of which he put into his gun, with about two and a half ounces of shot. My companion and myself walked off to a distance to watch the result, after we had cautioned the man about the strength of the powder. His gun, he said, required strong powder to make it shoot well. After waiting half an hour, down came some wild fowl, and bang went the gun, knocking the old fellow over, and sending his turban flying.

"Allāh, allāh, bisyār zov ust," (O Lord, Lord, how strong it is!) On going up to him, we discovered that he had sustained no injury beyond a cut lip and a bruise on the forehead; but when he found his young cannon all right, and that he had killed two birds, and wounded a third, that could not get away, he was perfectly happy, and asked for a little more powder for priming, which, to his great satisfaction, we gave him.

We enjoyed the winter as thoroughly as circumstances would permit — shooting, skating, snow-balling, making snow-giants, and pic-nics to

the lake, for the weather was frequently most enjoyable. Clouds would occasionally come over the sky, and we had two or three grey days, followed by a tremendous fall of snow for twenty-four or thirty hours at a spell, the snow falling in large flakes, and covering the earth to a depth of twenty-four or thirty inches. The clouds would then disperse, and the blue sky would appear, and oh, for a week, how clear, how blue and cloudless it was, with bright sunshine, and an atmosphere unknown in our hazy climate! The glories of those bright days and moonlight nights can be imagined by none, they must be seen to be appreciated.

During one of those bright and lovely days, I made a sketch of the fortification on the hill above the city of Cabool, from the top of a house in the Bala Hissar. It was rendered memorable to me by some fellow, who supposed I was looking at his hareem, taking a shot at me. As he fortunately missed his mark, I just held up my paper and pencil to show what I was at, and finished the sketch. The scene itself was a very striking one. On the rocky point above was the partly-ruined tower, the Koolla Feringhee, with its triple wall; and in the distance the peak of the Tukht-i-Shah. There are little walls on the tops of the houses, built to screen the ladies of the family, who mount up there for

domestic operations, always carried on in the open air.

When we entered the Bala Hissar, one of the duties that fell to my regiment was to supply a guard over the state prison—a private dwelling-house, hastily fitted up for the purpose, where Hadjee Khān Kākur and others were confined. Their prison-house was on the ramparts, the back wall of the house being only six feet from the parapet, and the floor a little above the level of the rampart. The only access to this place of confinement was through a court-yard, the door of which was down a passage. At this door a sentry was placed, with another in the court-yard, but none inside the room where the prisoners were confined.

One morning, very early, the relief discovered a large hole at the back of the house, and, on the alarm being raised, it was found that the prisoners had escaped. A slight inspection showed how this had been effected. The walls of the house were of brick, on a foundation of boulder-stones laid in clay. With the ribs of a sheep they had dug out the clay from between the stones of the foundation, after they had moistened it with water, and were not long in making a hole large enough to creep through. Once on the ramparts, their escape was easy. At intervals along the parapet there were large machicoulis,

through which to throw hot-water or stones on an enemy at the foot of the wall. Of course these openings were so large that a man's body would easily pass through them. As there was no sentry in sight, the fugitives took off their turbans and tied them together until a rope was formed long enough to reach the ground; then fastening one end to the middle of a stout stick which they put across the opening in the wall, each man easily slipped out, slid down the rope of turbans, and escaped through the ditch.

The officer in charge of the prisoners tried to throw the blame on the sentry, but it was shown in the court that tried the latter that he could not have seen the prisoners without leaving his post. Of course, therefore, the sentry was acquitted.

In the month of March a tragical circumstance occurred, which, as it tends to throw some light on the character of the sepoy, I will here relate. One morning a shot was fired in the barrack-square, and, as people were seen running together, the colonel, with whom I happened at the moment to be talking, desired me to see what had occurred. On reaching the square, I found a sepoy shot dead, and the perpetrator, a man of my company, in custody. The two men, when on guard the day before, had had a quarrel about some trifle. The man who was shot had

worked himself into a perfect fury, and abused the other in the foulest terms; not content with which, he heaped all kinds of indignant abuse on all his female relatives, using epithets in respect to their persons that are happily unknown in England. After a time, the men were calmed, and went through their duty as if nothing had occurred. When relieved from duty, the sepoy who had been abused walked off quietly to his barrack, took off his accoutrements, loaded his musket, and sat down outside, placing the gun across his knees, and pretending to rub up the lock, but in reality waiting for his enemy. In a few minutes the latter appeared, and in an instant the outraged sepoy jumped up, levelled his musket and shot the man dead, with such blind eagerness to accomplish his revenge, that he actually blew the coat off the shoulder of a havildar who was standing close by, with his back to him.

The sepoy was at once apprehended, tried by a court-martial, condemned to death, and hanged. At his execution he walked round the square with perfect calmness, with head erect, and as proud as if he had done an action of great merit, which, indeed, in his own eyes, he had, for he had avenged the outraged honour of his family.

We moved into camp in the middle of March, in order that the palace and garden-houses might

be prepared for the reception of the king, who returned from Jellalabad in April. In the middle of May, the heat in our tents at noon was so great that I determined to build a hut. So I dug a hole in the ground eighteen feet long, ten feet wide, and four feet deep, and with the excavated soil I raised a thick mud wall all round the hole, six feet high. When this was dry, I put beams across, and over them stout brushwood, then mats, and over all eight inches of earth, well beaten down, and then plastered. I had brought away my glass window from the Bala Hissar, and I put it up in a window-place made in the mud wall. Steps were cut down into the room, which was roofed over; a little wall was raised on each side of the steps, and my hut was complete.

In the beginning of September, information came in from Bameean that Dost Mahomed, who had begun to give us trouble, was advancing on that place with his ally the Wullee of Khooloom, and shortly after Dr. Lord, the political agent at Bameean, wrote to Mr. Macnaughten, our envoy, to say that the Shah's troops had been driven in from Syghan, and that he expected shortly to be surrounded in the Fort of Bameean. Immediately on the receipt of this information Colonel Dennie, H.M.'s 13th, was sent out to support our force at Bameean, with a detachment of

troops, of which my regiment was the most considerable part.

We crossed the Hindoo Koosh (Hindoo-killer), a branch of the great Himalayan chain, by the Irak Pass, 13,500 feet above the level of the sea; and as we were the first regiment that had carried the British flag over that great mountain range, we halted at the top of the pass, unfurled our colours, gave three cheers for the honour of Old England, and descended into Toorkistan. We were glad to have got so far, for our difficulties were at an end. We were within one long forced march of Bameean; so that, in case our friends were attacked, we could reach them in a few hours. After halting at the foot of the pass, we marched and encamped at the entrance to the Bameean Valley. Above our camp were the ruins of Zohauk, one of the strongest, most formidable, and picturesque hill-forts I have ever seen. I made a sketch of it on the spot, which I verified on our return. The hill on which it is built is the end of a range, from which it is separated by tremendous ravines. The side of the hill facing the Bameean Valley is perfectly perpendicular, like a wall; the side looking up the lateral valley is more lofty, but broken into crags and pinnacles. On this side is the ascent to the interior of the fort, by a very steep, narrow, zigzag road, defended by a perfect maze of

gateway-towers, bastions, and flanking defences of all kinds. The top of the hill is encircled by a line of fortification, within which rises a peak some two hundred feet higher, surrounded by a coronet of walls and bastions. The hill is of a deep red colour, and the whole has such a strange, unearthly appearance, that the superstitious people of the country say the "Devil was born there."

Below the fort is a beautiful clear stream, from which we were told those who occupied it were mainly supplied with water. At the angle of the two faces of the hill there is a projecting rock like a buttress, terminating in a large precipitous mass, on which is built a bastion, to which access is obtained by a narrow path cut into steps and sunk into the rock. In this bastion there is a communication by a well with a cut from the river. This was the weak part of this formidable fortress. An enemy having the ingenuity and courage to stop the communication with the water in the dry season, would soon be master of the fort, for there were no tanks on the summit that I could hear of.

Tradition assigns to these ruins a very high antiquity; they are said to have been built by the celebrated Persian monarch, Jemshid, and the citadel is still called after him Tukkt-i-Jemshid (the throne of Jemshid). Jemshid, as tradition has it, was conquered by Zohauk, a king

of Arabia. The bringing together these two names in this way would point to an antiquity of 800 B.C. Whether or not these ruins can be referred to so remote a period, they are certainly very wonderful, and must have been erected by a sovereign or chieftain of great power. The fort is on the principal road from Bulkh and Bokhara to Cabool and Hindostan, and was doubtless in later days a stronghold of one of those robber chiefs who levied taxes on all merchandise passing to and fro, and who by their extortions and vices ruined the trade of the people, depopulated the country, and helped on the desolation we saw everywhere around.

We were all very anxious to visit ruins of so much interest and importance, but could not leave camp, as every moment we expected to be summoned to Bameean by the sound of the enemy's guns. When we reached that place next morning we found all quiet; but our arrival had been most anxiously expected, for though the Dost had not yet appeared, it was known that he was not far off, and he might be looked for every hour.

Two days after our arrival, intelligence was brought in that the advanced parties of the enemy had attacked some friendly forts at the upper end of the valley. Colonel Dennie immediately took out a detachment of four companies

of my regiment, two horse-artillery guns, and a small body of horsemen, and went out to reconnoitre. Proceeding up the valley, and surmounting a slight rise, he all at once found himself in presence, not of a "few small parties," but of the whole of the Dost's army, which completely filled the end of the valley. Without a moment's hesitation or delay he got the infantry into line and advanced rapidly, firing as opportunities offered. His two guns served admirably, and sent shot and shell into the masses of the enemy with deadly precision. The Affghans, all in a heap at the narrow end of the valley, were so thoroughly surprised by our unexpected appearance, so dismayed by the execution done by the guns, as well as by Dennie's rapid advance, which gave them time neither to get into order, nor to do more than snatch up their arms, that they fled in the utmost confusion, pursued by our small party of horse and artillery for a considerable distance. In an hour the valley was completely cleared of them; and Dennie immediately advanced with his whole force on Syghan, which the enemy evacuated on our approach.

Our political agent now concluded an advantageous treaty with the Wallee of Khooloom, in which he undertook to withdraw from his alliance with the Dost, and neither to harbour him nor to give him any assistance.

Syghan is within a short distance of the two famous passes into Khooloom, one of which is called the Nal-i-Fursh (the carpet of horse-shoes); the other, the Dundan Shikun (the tooth-breaker), both appropriate names, the latter in particular. The layers of limestone, of which the hill is composed, lie flat on the surface, and as the incline is steep, and the slabs are smooth, the horses in going up slip, come down on their muzzles, and break their teeth; at least, so say the natives, and such is the origin which they assign to the name. The road to these two passes diverges at the fort of Sir-i-Sung.

The fort is built on an isolated rock of limestone, at the end of the range of hills that form one side of the valley we came down. On three sides the rock is perfectly perpendicular, the fourth is narrow, with a very steep incline, up which is the road into the fort, flanked by two strong bastions. The fort is twice as long as it is broad, and the end opposite the entrance has a very singular appearance. There are three natural buttresses to it, and as the layers of limestone composing them are very distinct, they have the appearance of buttresses built by the hand of man, and injured by time or by violence. Of the two bastions at the end, the nearest to the spectator was once the scene of a terrible tragedy. The chief of that part of

the country died, leaving two sons. The elder, who succeeded to the chieftainship, was an easy-going, good-tempered, indolent man, loving his ease, his pipe, and his Friday's "Syle;" the younger, to whom a small share of property had been left, was, on the contrary, a bold, daring, turbulent spirit, who very soon involved his brother and himself in a quarrel with a neighbouring chief, who resolved to attack this stronghold. The younger brother undertook to put the fort into a state of repair, and having induced the elder to visit this bastion, under the pretext of showing him what was to be done, he suddenly pushed him over, and the latter was literally dashed to pieces at the foot of the rock. Subsequently the fort was captured by one of Dost Mahomed's generals, who had besieged it for some time in vain, as it was to all appearance impregnable. A brilliant thought, however, fortunately came into his head. He retired six miles up the valley to a place where he had observed that the slope of the range of hills, of which Sir-i-Sung was the termination, was rather easier. Up this slope, with great labour, he and his people dragged a couple of guns. When once on the top the rest was easy enough, as the hill-tops were pretty level. He soon got the guns to a spot that completely commanded the interior of the fort within easy range, and in twenty-four

once more highly cultivated and more thickly populated, as there is everywhere abundant evidence to prove. On our first march from Bameean towards Syghan we discovered along the face of the hills that bounded one side of the valley the remains of an old well-executed water-course, and for thirteen miles along our road we continued to trace it. It was utterly ruined; and there was no cultivation anywhere about Bameean needing such a water-course. Everywhere we saw ruined forts, ruined villages, deserted fields, and desolation—all indicating that the country had declined from a state of prosperity which it once enjoyed.

We returned to Bameean, and halted there ten days—a delay which afforded us an opportunity of inspecting at leisure the celebrated "Bhoots" of Bameean (Idols), which may be reckoned amongst the great curiosities of the world. Near the fort of Bameean, the hill that bounds this valley to the north side, is scarped away perpendicularly to the height of two hundred and fifty feet, and in breadth sixty feet. Here in a niche, thirty feet deep, hollowed out for the purpose, is carved an enormous figure, measuring one hundred and eighty feet in height from the top of the head to the surface of the rubbish below, which buries the feet and ankles. The hill is what geologists term coarse conglomerate, and, as

this is not adapted to fine carving, the sculptors, who were in some difficulty how to represent the features, the drapery, &c., hit upon this plan. The figure was first roughly cut out with a flat surface; in this, holes were drilled at proper intervals, into which stout stakes were driven, and over these plaster was laid, which was then easily moulded according to their fancy. A reference to the frontispiece of the second volume will show at once how this was done. The figure has been partially destroyed by the Mahomedans, who are one and all furious iconoclasts. Every sort of weapon has been used to destroy it—cannon-shot, bullets, spears, axes, but what remains will last for many a hundred years yet, if let alone. The left leg has been entirely destroyed, and the right leg as far as the knee. On the left side of the figure are shown the holes for the timbers that supported the flowing drapery, of which on the right side there are some remains. At the two elbows are large holes for timbers, twelve inches square, on which the arms were moulded. Where the legs have been destroyed, the holes are visible, and in the actual figure the stumps of some of the stakes are still remaining. The drapery intended to be represented is a fine muslin covering the body, and hanging over the arms in easy folds, exactly as worn at the present day by the natives of India. The neck is bare,

the upper part of the face has been destroyed, and the mouth and chin, with the whole of the right and part of the left ear, remain. The knot of hair on the top of the head is partly injured, and on the left shoulder a hut has been built.

The head of this image is thirty feet high, from chin to top-knot. The niche over the head has been smoothed and plastered, and on this figures, in various attitudes of contemplation, have been painted. From these, as well as from the general form of the figure and the drapery, we know that it is an image of Boodh. Between the legs is the entrance to a circular cave, twenty-one feet in diameter, and to the right and left are similar caves, but very much larger. These caves have been used as places of refuge for men and camels by the kafilahs passing and repassing between Cabool and Bokhara, and such an amazing quantity of manure has accumulated outside, in spite of the vast quantities burned and carried away, that there is a quite a steep descent into the caves; the feet and ankles of the image are covered by it to a considerable depth. Behind the head extensive chambers and galleries, communicating with each other, are worked into the hills, and the whole of the space to the right and left of the figure, for a mile and a half, is pierced with caverns, which are either temples or dwelling-

places. There was also a winding stair, pierced in the hill, leading to the top of the image, but being choked with rubbish, it is now impracticable; the only way to reach the head is by ascending the hill and going down through the caves and galleries behind.

To the right of the plate is seen a mass of caves, with ravines piercing deeply into the hill. These caves are eighty, a hundred, and one hundred and twenty feet above the level of the valley, and the rubbish and débris from them make a regular slope, up which are wide paths and tracks for man and cattle. The hill to the right of the image (left of the plate) has peeled away and exposed some of the galleries leading from one set of caves to another, and in two places on the right of the figure are shown two vertical openings, which are stairs leading from the lower to the upper tiers of chambers. The wall enclosing the sacred precincts is in ruins, and serves no longer as a defence. The inhabitants of these recesses are all Mahomedans. The caves with loftier arched openings are temples. There is one high up on the left of the plate, and another on the right, near the mass of caves.

About half a mile further to the left of this image is another of the same description, only smaller, and a little different in detail. It is one hundred and twenty feet high. The stairs

excavated in the hill, by which we ascended to the head of this figure, are perfect. The top of the head is flattened, and affords an excellent place for observing the very singular frescoes on the arch of the niche over it. Two of these frescoes are particularly remarkable. One represents a man winged and armed cap-à-pie, holding a shield in his left hand; the other is a creature half man, half bird, man's head and shoulders, bird in the nether parts. There are also groups of women and other figures, but all of them terribly defaced by Mahomedan fanatics, who have perforated them everywhere with matchlock balls, and with long spears have picked out the eyes of all within reach. The injuries, however, have not rendered the figures at all indistinct, and the colours are as bright as when first laid on.

These immense figures, which are evidently images of Boodh, are well known to have attracted crowds of pilgrims from Hindostan. They must have been constructed before the followers of Mahomed overran this country, for these bigots, especially in the early days of their power and fanaticism, would never have permitted the construction of idols that are abhorrent to their faith, which prohibits them from carving, drawing, or making any semblance of any animate creature. These idols must, therefore, date from a period of at least 900 years ago.

One day, at Bameean, a native of the country came and asked "if the gentlemen would like to see the skeleton of a dragon?"

"The skeleton of what?" I exclaimed; "a dragon—an ajdaha?"

"Yes, sir, a dragon, an ajdaha. Slain by a holy Peer (Saint)."

Though strictly questioned, the man persisted in his story, and added, in proof of its truth, and of the power of the peer by whom the dragon was slain, that "one of the teeth still continued to bleed." This convinced us that at all events there was something curious to be seen; so getting due leave, and a small escort of cavalry, a good party of us set out, and bearing in mind Hyder Khail, and the fate of poor Colonel Herring, we all went well armed. Our road was towards a low range of hills, which we entered. After riding through some pretty grassy valleys we turned an angle of a hill, when our guide, stopping all at once, exclaimed with awe, "See, gentlemen, there is the ajdaha, and there are the teeth, and behold the blood is flowing!" Looking in the direction indicated, we saw, on a long low mound of grass, projecting from the hill-side, a white object, fifty feet long, on which, at regular intervals, was a series of lumps, the whole bearing a strong resemblance to a backbone. At the outer end was an enlarge-

ment that represented the remains of a skull, and close to it, rising out of the ground, were four cones, three of them white, the fourth blood-red. On riding up and examining it, we found that it was a deposit of pure lime—a spring, which had originally gushed out of the hill-side, having here deposited the lime with which its water was fully charged. This process had gone on year by year for ages, and the water, keeping for itself a channel along the top, had flowed over, and formed the backbone. The channel had then closed, and the water, flowing over the end, had formed the resemblance of a head, and then ceased. By some mysterious agency the spring had burst out of the ground at the end of the deposit, and in time had formed a cone, the orifice had closed, and then another had formed, and so on in succession. Sand and dust, blown by the wind, had accumulated against the side of the large deposit, grass and weeds, too, had grown on it, leaving exposed about ten inches in height of the mass of white lime, which, when seen from a distance, had the appearance, as before mentioned, of an enormous backbone lying on a mound of turf. The tooth flowing with blood was the most curious part of all. It was one of those cones in process of formation, and was about two and a half feet in height. In the very top of the cone was a hole about an inch and a quarter in diameter, out of

which welled a little stream, fine, clear, and sparkling, not flowing evenly, but in jerks—a curious phenomenon, which to me was quite unaccountable. It seemed to have the effect of ribbing the cone, for the latter presented that appearance all round, making it to some extent resemble a peg-top. All over it grew a curious small blood-red weed, so thick that a few feet off the water flowing over it looked like a stream of blood. As we were all silent for a little space whilst satisfying our curiosity, our guide asked whether we now believed him. "Wonderful, wonderful!" we replied, shaking our heads solemnly, and he was quite satisfied. So were we, for we had seen a most curious sight, and had a very pleasant ride. We returned to camp without any adventure.

It had been the intention of our envoy to make us winter in the caves on the hill in this dreary valley, but the Dost's movements in Kohistan caused him to recall us.

We encamped about the 5th October, on our return march, at the foot of the Irak Pass, and recrossed it just in time, for two days later the pass was closed by snow. The cold was intense. I had been engaged the whole day of the 6th in getting our guns over the crest of the defile, and in lowering them down the first descent, at the foot of which, in a sheltered spot, my tent was pitched.

Although the material was new and thick, next morning at day-break I found that a small quantity of strong brandy and water, left by my bedside, was frozen into a solid mass of ice.

Our only fuel in these passes was a small shrub, about eighteen inches or two feet in diameter, growing into a perfect hemisphere, and armed with spines fully two and a half inches long. This shrub, shaped like a skull-cap, is called Koolla Huzara (the Huzara's cap). It burnt well, but too quickly, just giving us some warmth, and then dying out.

The whole country in this high region, 12,000 feet above the level of the sea, was covered with snow, and the swollen mountain streams that were running when we came from Cabool, were frozen solid. The reflection from the sun blinded some of us, and, with the wind, blistered the faces of all to such a degree, that when we reached Cabool the whole skin peeled from them like parchment.

Sir Robert Sale had been operating with great effect in Kohistan against the disaffected chiefs who favoured Dost Mahomed, taking and dismantling their forts and strong places; and the Dost, seeing that for the time at least the game was up, rode into Cabool with a single attendant, and on the 3rd November surrendered himself to Sir W. Macnaughten. His family was immediately

restored to him, and under escort of the 1st European Bengal Fusiliers, he was despatched to our provinces.

In the middle of November we moved into very comfortable quarters prepared for us in a fortified cantonment, a mile and three quarters from the city. The situation was faulty in the extreme, and the defects of the cantonment and commissariat fort were very great;[1] but the engineer officer, the lamented Captain Sturt, had no option in the matter—the situation was chosen for him, and he had no alternative but to make the best of it.

[1] Placing our stores of food in a detached fort was an outrageous violation of the first military principles.

CHAPTER VIII.

Outbreak at Cabool commences—March to Bootkhak—Night Attack on our Camp—Repulsed—Sale comes out to join us—Force the Khoord Cabool Pass—Posted at Eastern Outlet of the Pass—Sale Returns to Bootkhak—Warning—Night Attack on our Camp—Heavy Loss—Enemy Repulsed—Sale Arrives—March to Teyzeen—Action—Jugdulluck—Affair of Rear Guard—Gundummuck—Futteabad—Affair of Rear Guard—We have our Revenge—Ch-a-a-rge—Reach Jellalabad.

I PASS over the winter of 1840 and the summer of 1841 as uneventful periods, when nothing worthy of particular record occurred.

In October, 1841, our brigade was to return to the provinces, as our relief had arrived, and the country seemed tranquil. Dost Mahomed was prisoner in our provinces, and no chieftain seemed inclined to disturb us. Akber Khan, indeed, was still at large, and there was no luring him into captivity; but as yet he seemed to have no influence in the country. So our preparations for the march home were continued. The envoy, Sir W. Macnaughten, was to return with us, and Sir Alexander Burnes was to succeed him.

But the calm was superficial. Shah Soojah made himself personally odious to all his chiefs

and subjects by his absurd pride and overbearing haughtiness. The people were recovering from the stunning blows dealt them at Ghuznee, and in the campaigns against the Dost, and Akber Khan's intrigues began to be carried on with effect.

At this time, too, Sir W. Macnaughten most unwisely stirred up the wrath of the Gilzaee chiefs by diminishing the subsidies paid to them for keeping the passes open for our trade. He had also interfered so much with the Shah's mode of governing the country, that the system of administration had become a compound of Affghan severity and Macnaughten milk and water philanthropy, a mixture of iron and clay, as in the images in the Chaldean king's dream, utterly unsuited to the fierce tribes of the country, who soon detected the weakness of their rulers. The consequence was that the Gilzaee chiefs, emboldened by the feebleness of the Government, sent men to occupy and close the Khoord Cabool Pass—the first act of the great tragedy that was about to be played.

As a check to the proceedings of the Affghans in the Khoord Cabool Pass (for nothing serious was apprehended), my regiment, with Broadfoot's Sappers, and two 9-pounder guns of Abbott's battery, were directed to move towards the pass—a place which was destined to be the scene of the

most important events—and to encamp at the mouth of that defile, the name of which was soon to become so familiar to the people of England. Accordingly, we marched on the 9th October and encamped at Bootkhak, within a mile of the pass. In the evening a small guard of Broadfoot's Sappers, coming out from Cabool with stores, was fired into by a party of Affghans, and several of our camp-followers were stopped and robbed.

Our camp was pitched on a level piece of ground, surrounded by ravines, with a long rocky hill immediately in our front, not two hundred yards distant. This hill was four hundred feet high, and at the foot of it was the road to the pass.

Our mess-dinner was just over, when the native officer commanding the quarter-guard sent in a sepoy to tell the colonel that a great number of people were to be seen assembled on the hill above us, and that he had heard them loading their juzzails. The juzzail, it may be mentioned, is a long, heavy rifle, generally carrying an ounce ball, and not unfrequently fired from a rest attached to its stock. The ball is put into the rifle naked, and requires to be hammered a good deal with an iron ramrod to get it home. This hammering makes a loud ringing noise, that can be heard at a considerable distance, so unmistakeable in its character that it can never be for-

gotten by those whose ears have once been startled by the unfamiliar sound.

"Gentlemen," said the colonel, "you had better go and turn out your respective companies instantly, and as quietly as possible. I will be with you immediately."

We were on parade in a moment, and found the regiment already under arms, and every man getting into his place as rapidly and silently as possible. Not a word was spoken, and in a few seconds all was ready. The colonel now made his appearance, with a good serviceable sword tucked under his arm, ready for work. His first order was given to the quartermaster to send parties round the camp to put out every light instantly; and the next, to reinforce the picket on our left flank, and send it down into the ravine on the same side. I was ordered to take two companies directly to the front, to the very foot of the hill where the Affghans were posted, with directions to keep the men silent as death; to make them kneel or sit down, and not to fire a shot unless the enemy came down the hill. The colonel at the same time gave directions that two other companies should be ordered out to support me in the movement I was to undertake. I marched off at the head of my men, and had scarcely reached my post when the whole hill-top seemed to burst into flame, from the simultaneous dis-

charge of hundreds of juzzails. Shouts and yells of "Yelli, Yelli, Yelli, (short for Ya Ullah), at the same time rent the air, accompanied by howlings that would have done credit to a thousand jackals. It was very uncomfortable work to have our camp peppered by these wretches, and not to be able to return a shot. But the colonel's plan was the only one that was consistent with safety. The fire of the enemy was furious and well sustained for upwards of an hour, but not very effective. A man, indeed, was occasionally hit, but as every light in camp was out, the Affghans, looking down into utter darkness, in the midst of which not a sound was to be heard, could neither see an object at which to aim, nor hear a sound by which to direct their fire.

But this impunity did not last long, as active measures were now about to be taken on our side. Masses of the enemy could be seen standing up at the end of the hill to our left front, where the height cut sharp and clear against the sky. The artillery officer, getting one of his guns to bear against this point, put in a shell and fired in the old-fashioned way, as we had no percussion tubes. The moment the port-fire was lighted, it gave the enemy all he wanted, viz., our direction and distance. The guns were posted at our quarter-guard, and ere a second had

elapsed, the glare guiding the enemy's aim, seven of our men were knocked over. Lighting the port-fire was an unfortunate mistake, but it was instantly put out by the colonel's order, and the injured men were removed to hospital. As soon as they arrived, the doctor lighted a candle to examine their wounds, but the light shining through the tent, again betrayed us to the enemy, who immediately fired at it. Some of those men just taken in were wounded again, and a few of the sick were hit.

The colonel again sent peremptory orders by an officer that on no account was any light to be permitted, although, as it turned out, it had done us an unexpected piece of good service—having distracted the attention of the enemy, who lost the direction of the regiment and quarter-guard, and once more fired at random. The long-continued darkness and silence in our camp greatly puzzled the Affghans, especially as, with the exception of the single gun already alluded to, we did not attempt to return their fire. Imagining that we had either run away, or that their fierce fire had "sent all the sons of burnt fathers to Jehunnum" (hell), they moved down the hill in two bodies, to spoil the camp and slay the wounded, their progress being accompanied by fearful yells and shouts, by which we were made aware of the direction they had taken

in descending to attack us. One body had moved off by way of the ravines on our left, which they had no sooner entered than they were received by a volley that astonished them. The main body came more slowly and cautiously, led by a man whose loud shouts of "Yelli, Yelli!" uttered in a magnificently deep and sonorous voice, were heard clear above all the others. This party came gradually down the lower slope of the hill, until we could just see them looming through the gloom, when, in a moment, they were down upon us. The men of my two companies had been sitting down on the ground, with their muskets between their knees, but the short word "*Ready!*" brought them to the kneeling position with their muskets cocked; and at the word "*Present!*" a volley from 170 men crashed amongst the enemy with awful effect. In an instant every shout of defiance ceased, they were thrown into wild confusion, and with a loud tramping sound, they flew in disorder up the hill; the noise of their feet, and of the showers of stones that came rattling down as they ascended, quite drowning the cries of the wounded.

As soon as my men had reloaded I made them sit down, and again the darkness and silence befriended us, for in a few minutes the Affghans once more opened fire; but though heavy enough,

our precaution made it comparatively harmless. The "Yelli! Yelli!" was no longer vociferated, and the fire gradually decreased, being apparently kept up only to distract our attention whilst they searched for and carried off their killed and wounded, who had disappeared when day dawned. We had some forty men killed and wounded, and but for our colonel's presence of mind and foresight, our loss would have been trebled; for, undoubtedly, silence and darkness proved our best friends.

It was a marvel how our horses and camp followers escaped, the number of wounded amongst them being comparatively few. My tent was shot through in six places; and although every other except the colonel's was hit, it is astonishing that, with two exceptions, not a horse or camel was seriously injured.

We could not tell what loss the enemy suffered, for they always made it a point of honour to carry off their dead and wounded; but, from the numerous marks of blood visible, they must have suffered severely.

As soon as this determined attack on us was known at Cabool, General Sale came out with the rest of the brigade, and on the 12th we marched to force the Khoord Cabool Pass—certainly one of the most formidable-looking defiles I ever saw, and, to an enemy either weak in

numbers, poorly armed, badly commanded, or wanting in "pluck," an impassable barrier. A little river runs between two ranges of hills—the eastern range, at a point where it approaches close to the stream, towering directly over it to the height of 1000 feet. The western range is half that height, and the spurs of both so interlace each other that the stream is turned alternately to right and left twenty times in the course of about 3000 yards. Not more than 140 or 150 yards of the stream can at any one point be seen at one time, and every inch of it is completely commanded by these natural breastworks, and by the peaks above them. In winter this little river becomes a foaming torrent, which brings down vast quantities of shingle and large boulders that block the bed of the stream and fill the bends. The only road through the pass is by the bed of the river; and so formidable is it in reality, that a determined enemy might successfully dispute the passage of a force greatly superior in numbers. No body of men, however well armed and commanded, could hope to get through it without a sharp, and possibly a desperate struggle.

This day I had command of the advanced guard. As we approached the pass, masses of men were seen going along the sides towards some point within it where we heard they had

raised a sunga (breastwork of stone) and dammed up the stream. This would be a serious obstacle to our progress. There were evidently well-beaten tracks along the sides of the pass—the masses of men moving along them showed that,—and, like Captain Cuttle, Sale made a "note of it." When we entered the defile, the General, after a sharp and minute survey, sent a strong body of flankers up the side to go along the paths pointed out by the enemy. When we had proceeded about a third of the way through, and had reached a point where the pass begins to narrow, we came upon a rocky peak on the left, immediately overhanging the defile, upon which the enemy were clustering thick as bees. As soon as we arrived within reach of their muskets they saluted us with a perfect storm of bullets, which showered down on us like hail, plashing into the water and dashing up the shingle. Our only casualties were one officer and some men wounded. It was really wonderful how so few were hit, considering our exposed position, and the advantageous post held by the enemy, from which the Affghans had poured down their fire upon us. The General now ordered us to get under cover and keep ourselves sheltered until the flankers could get at the enemy.

As soon as the attack was felt, the light

company of the 35th, gallantly led by Captain Younghusband, who was severely wounded in this affair, stormed and carried the rocky point. When our flankers began to press on the enemy, the advanced guard moved on again, preceded by the brave and noble Havelock, who formed quite a picture, riding a few yards a-head of us as upright and stately as in his youngest days, reconnoitring the different positions of the enemy perched on the crags above us. Erect in his saddle he looked as calm and unmoved as if he were taking a morning ride, and was admiring the scenery, which was really very beautiful and picturesque, and well worthy of our admiration, if we could have paused to admire it. All at once, Havelock, who was turning one of the spurs of the hill, called out, "Here's the sunga; come on, it's nothing." It was in the narrowest part of the pass, and as we approached, the enemy, who seemed to be concentrated above it, opened fire on us from every available point.

The sunga, as Havelock said truly, was "nothing," and the river had made a complete breach in it where it had been built across its bed. Replying to the enemy's fire whenever we could do so with effect, we moved slowly on, so as not to get too far ahead of the flankers, who were keeping pace with the head of the column, and

driving the Affghans before them. When the column reached the sunga, they opened such a fire on the enemy within reach, that it seemed fairly to astound them, the sound of musketry echoing and re-echoing among the hills was so deafening. Their fire instantly slackened, and in their panic they gave way before our flankers, who, as they retired further up the pass, came steadily on. Besides Captain Younghusband, already mentioned, Lieutenants Mein and Oakes of the 13th were wounded, as also General Sale, who had been struck shortly after entering the pass.

When the advanced guard had passed the sunga, the two guns under Lieutenant Dawes dashed at the breach made by the water, and with a few bumps managed to get through. The Affghans, now pressed from point to point by our flankers, gradually retreated, and then disappeared over the hills. The enemy had calculated that the stones heaped across the stream would be sufficient to dam it up and cause such a serious obstruction to our advance, that whilst we were attempting to remove them, they would be able to shoot down men and horses at their leisure, thus causing such confusion and dismay, that we should be compelled to retire, and buy a passage through the pass. They did not take into their calculation that the force of the accumulated

water would burst the sunga, nor did they expect to be attacked in flank by our parties moving along the paths they themselves had shown us. But for these two mistakes, our task would have been a much more difficult one, and our loss more severe.

After the pass had been forced, my regiment, Broadfoot's Sappers, and two guns under Lieutenant Dawes, were ordered to encamp near the outlet, and the 13th to return to their former camp, so as to keep the defile open for the envoy and the remainder of the troops under orders to return to Hindostan.

If I had any intention of discussing the politics of the day, or of detailing the causes of the revolution that was at hand, this would be the place; but as I desire only to relate those events in which I was personally engaged, I will merely mention that our chiefs at Cabool, Sir W. Macnaughten, Sir A. Burnes, and General Elphinstone, were either unable to foresee the storm that was bursting on them, or they wilfully shut their eyes and ears to all signs of the impending danger.

Before the 13th returned through the pass we were ordered to encamp in a ruined serai, or fort, situated near the mouth; but the moment we were left to ourselves, and our colonel, T. Monteath, was in command, he very quietly said,

"I'll not go into that place; it is far from water, and is so overlooked from all sides, that we could not hold it for an hour."

The colonel therefore determined to search for a place more to his liking, which after some examination he found. It was the end of a long plateau, forty feet above the level of the valley, extending from within three quarters of a mile of the pass to the Tung-i-Tareekhi, a narrow gorge through a spur of the great chain of hills, the end of which forms the eastern side of the Khoord Cabool Pass.

Our portion of the plateau was all but separated from the remaining and greater part of it by deep and wide ravines; the only connexion being by a narrow neck some fifty feet wide, which dipped in the middle. It was a place where water could easily be procured, as there was a small brook to the north of the plateau, and a larger one to the south; and the high road was to the north, distant two hundred and fifty yards.

The plateau was forty feet above the brook on the north side, and for more than half its length there was a precipitous drop of ten feet, and then a steep slope to its banks. The width of the plateau was one hundred and fifty yards, the length above seven hundred, and the end towards the pass ran off into a sharp point. Where

the precipitous part of the plateau terminated, there was a ravine cutting diagonally inwards for about fifty yards, and from hence a steep slope to the plain ran all round our position.

As the north side was perfectly unassailable for two-thirds of the length on account of the precipice, the colonel ordered the camp to be pitched so as to face to the south, the most probable point of attack, if the enemy should again venture to assail us. In front of the quarter-guard was a projection like a bastion, on which our two guns were placed in position; and so admirably was it adapted to our purpose that they could sweep the whole of our front, and beyond it for a considerable distance. As soon as camp was pitched, Captain Broadfoot, commanding the sappers, went, by the colonel's desire, round the whole position to see what could be done to strengthen it. Under Captain B.'s superintendence several important works were commenced and rapidly pushed on, one being a work for fifty men at the point of the plateau nearest the pass; and as the nearest end of the larger plateau was higher than that on which we were encamped, and from it the enemy could sweep the whole of our position, a work for a hundred men was erected on it close to the neck. These works, which were built of heavy stones, the interstices being filled with earth, are easily

constructed; and when the enemy have no guns they are very effective. By the Affghans they are called sungas, from sung (a stone).

Captain G. H. Macgregor, of the Artillery, a young officer of more than ordinary ability, and of great influence with the natives, joined us on the 15th October as political agent, bringing with him, as an escort, a party of Dooranee horsemen selected by the prime minister. Serious as were the first mutterings of the storm that was preparing to burst with appalling violence upon them, the authorities at Cabool continued to treat it as a mere passing cloud. In camp, however, where we had information of the gathering of the chiefs at Teyzeen, of the Gilzaees being in arms, and of the bands of armed men hovering about Bootkhak and other places, we had become fully aware that a serious struggle was impending.

Colonel Monteath, who was not a man to be caught napping, ordered alarm-posts to be appointed, and by his authority sungas were erected for each picket and sentry. At night the officers on duty went their rounds frequently, every one remaining with his company or at his post till day-break. The nights were intensely cold and the dew very heavy, and as our men had been provided neither with great-coats nor with neemchas (sheepskin coats), we were obliged

to relieve sentry every half hour. I always sent a mattress and quilt to my post, and lying down fully accoutred, was ready to turn out in a second whenever the necessity arose. My quilt in the morning was invariably as hard as a board with frozen dew, and would stand up by itself. With weather of such severity, what must the sepoys, natives of a torrid climate, have suffered in this campaign!

Our mess-tent was in the rear, within twenty yards of the verge of the plateau, where there was the drop of ten feet; further to the right was the ravine cutting into the plateau, and just beyond the ravine, and next to our commissariat camp, Macgregor's Affghan horse (Doorannee tribe) were posted in a position where, with much ostentation, they erected small sungas for themselves, and laid out their large juzzails. Our preparations for defence continued without intermission, for every day reports came in that we were to be attacked by the whole force of the Teyzeen chiefs, and that, when the attack was made, it would be a real shub khoon (a night of slaughter).

One of Macgregor's first acts on arriving in camp, was to send a small party of men, on whom he believed he could rely, to the Tung-i-Tareekhi, to give us timely notice of the approach of an enemy from that quarter. On the evening of the 17th,

just at dusk, several sepoys and camp-followers reported that they had seen men prowling about the ravines, and under the high bank of the great plateau on our left. Instant search was made, but in the fast-increasing gloom it was useless, and was therefore discontinued for the time, though every one felt that something of more than ordinary import was on foot. At eight o'clock, when we were all seated at mess, a man from Macgregor's outpost came in breathless with a note for that officer, telling him, at the same time, that the enemy was assembling at the Tung. In great astonishment, Macgregor read the note, after which he questioned theman, looked at it again, and then read it out to us. It was from one of the chiefs at Teyzeen, saying they had arrived at the Tung-i-Tareekhi, and that in two hours' time they would attack us—a piece of information which was greeted with a shout of laughter all round the table, Macgregor, however, assuring us that the attack would certainly be made. A polite reply was sent to the effect that we should be happy to receive the chiefs, and would endeavour to give them a suitable welcome. The colonel directed all the officers to repair at once to their respective posts, keeping me by him, as my company was near at hand, and my outpost was not far off, on the nearest end of the great plateau, and there were thirty men in it already.

We had several alarms in various quarters, principally on the left, but no enemy was satisfactorily made out. At half-past nine, the sentry in rear of the mess-tent challenged and fired. I rushed out, went down on hands and knees, put my head over the precipice, and distinctly heard a large body of men marching along under it towards our right. Informing the colonel of this, I proceeded with all haste to my company and started with it for our post. The sentries, now beginning to see the enemy, fired in front and rear. When, with the men under my command, I got within fifty yards of my post, a very large body of the enemy coming along the plateau opened a tremendous fire on us, accompanied by the usual howling and cries of "Yelli, Yelli!" I shouted out to the native officer at my post not to fire, that I was close at hand. This precaution kept the party quiet, and in a minute we were in the work, every man in his place, and kneeling down, to be under cover, the native officer and myself alone standing. The balls were flying about our ears, cutting the top of the sunga, and rattling amongst the men's bayonets, that projected above the parapet, the only cessation being a momentary one, as the enemy came upon the end of a large ravine to the right of my post.

In the meantime, some fires that had been lighted by Macgregor's people had been extin-

guished. Heavy firing was apparently going on in the middle of the camp, which was presently taken up on the left of the regiment. The enemy on the plateau again advanced, drumming, shouting, and firing as warmly as before. All this time we remained perfectly still, my object being to keep our position concealed from the enemy, in hopes that they might stumble on it in the dark, when something decisive might be done. Presently the old native officer put his hand on my arm, and pressing it tightly, whispered, "Here they come, sahib—see!" And sure enough there they were, and very near to us, their forms being distinguishable within twenty paces of our position. The word was now passed all round, the men rose silently, and at the word of command delivered an effective volley. A shout of horror was instantly raised, followed by a confused noise of hundreds of feet rushing down the ravine, and the drumming and shouting ceased. In a few minutes, a warm but very wild fire was again opened on us from the ravines, which lasted for two hours, to which we replied with such effect that the enemy's fire gradually died away. As heavy firing was still going on in other directions all round the camp, I sent word to the colonel that the enemy in my front had been repulsed, and that I could spare forty men to assist wherever their aid might be

deemed necessary; in reply to which the colonel informed me that none were at present required. The men who had been repulsed by our fire, having now ensconced themselves amongst the rocks and in the ravines around, annoyed us considerably with desultory firing, which we had much difficulty in putting down. Towards morning, however, becoming convinced that they were only wasting their ammunition to little purpose, they drew off, and as they retired we could hear their parties shouting to each other, as they proceeded in the direction of the Tung-i-Tarcekhi. One of their chiefs, I was informed, was killed by a parting volley from our men.

We were congratulating ourselves on the trifling loss we had sustained, and the success with which we had repulsed the enemy, when a sepoy, whom I had permitted at dawn to go and inquire after his brother, came back with the sad intelligence that the enemy had by treachery obtained admittance to our camp, and that Captain Jenkins and twenty men of the Grenadier company had been killed and wounded. At daybreak, when I withdrew my party, I heard all the particulars of this tale of treachery.

The Doorannee horsemen sent by the Prime Minister with Captain Macgregor, had been in communication with the enemy, and had lighted

the fires I noticed, to guide them by the easiest access to the rear of our camp. The Dooraunees refusing to obey the order to put the fires out, the colonel had been obliged to send the sergeant-major with a party to enforce obedience. When the fires were extinguished, Colonel Monteath directed Captain Jenkins to march the Grenadier company in that direction in case of an attack, Captain Wyndham being appointed to follow him with No. 5 company. Whilst Jenkins was threading his way through the camels, a body of Affghans started up from amongst them, and shot him down at once, with upwards of twenty of his men. Then seizing the commissariat treasure-chest, of the position of which they had gained information, they tried to carry it off, but Captain Wyndham, coming up with his company, rallied the Grenadiers, rescued the chest, and drove the Affghans out of camp, though not without some plunder, as, during the confusion, which for some time was very great, they managed to carry off some of our camels, and had hamstrung a dozen or more. The firing which I had noticed in the middle of the camp took place during this attack. It was afterwards found that our sentry had been killed, and as he had been cut down from behind, it was evident that this cowardly act must have been the work of the Dooraunee horse, who were

stationed close to his beat, and who completed the vile treachery of which they had been guilty by firing up the main street of our camp, to cover the entrance of the enemy.

The plan of the Teyzeen chiefs, though thus fortunately defeated, was really well conceived, and carried out with great courage and audacity. Their open avowal of their intention to attack us they calculated would disarm all suspicion of treachery. Our attention was to be drawn to the false attack on my post, and whilst the main body of our men were engaged in repulsing it, the party admitted to our camp were to carry off our treasure-chest and cattle, and, in the confusion, assail our men in rear, when the false attack would be turned into a real one, and the shub khoon would be fully realized. But the body of men that came along the plateau stumbled in the dark on my post, and the volley suddenly blazed into their faces utterly disconcerted them. Another party of the enemy that had come round below the plateau, and had swarmed into the ravines on our left, came on a breastwork they knew nothing of, and were kept off, whilst the attack in rear was foiled by Colonel Monteath's precaution, of sending down the two companies to strengthen our post in that direction.

Captain Jenkins, whose death I have already alluded to, was shot in the spine, and expired in

great agony, on the morning of the 20th. We could not ascertain the loss of the enemy in this attack, for, as usual, they carried off their dead and wounded; but, on going over the ground in front of my post, and the other points of attack, we found large pools of blood, portions of brains, sword-belts, scabbards, and remnants of clothing in all directions. In many places, too, down the sides of the ravines, the bushes and weeds were covered with blood, from contact with the bodies as they had been dragged away. A report which represented the Affghan loss as very considerable was corroborated by the silent evidence on the ground.

On the news of this night's attack reaching Sale, he at once reinforced us, and joined us himself. Whilst he was coming through the Khoord Cabool Pass, we sent our wounded into Cabool; and a heavy list it was—eighty-nine men in these two attacks, exclusive of the killed, and of those who, having received only slight injuries, were still able to march.

As soon as our arrangements were completed, we marched on the 22nd by Kubber-Jubber, through the formid[illegible] Huft Kotul defile to the Teyzeen valley. Fortunately for us, this defile was not occupied in any great strength by the enemy, but towards sunset our rear-guard and flankers were attacked, and some of our camels were

carried off through the lateral ravines, of which there were scores running into the defile.

As soon as we got into the Teyzeen valley, we had some sharp skirmishes with the Gilzaees, in an encounter with whom we lost a brave and promising young officer, Lieutenant E. King, of the 13th, who had been sent with two companies of that regiment, one of them under Lieutenant Rattray, to attack a body of the enemy posted on a hill that overlooked the valley. Their attack was successful, and they drove the enemy before them, pursuing them with great eagerness, but, like many other young officers, they committed the fatal mistake of pursuing too far, and forgot to look into their men's pouches to see how the ammunition lasted. The consequence was that when at last the enemy made a stand, our soldiers found themselves without means of replying to their fire, and the men, getting flurried, ran for it. Lieutenants King and Rattray showed front to the Gilzaees, who were closing upon them, but they too were ultimately obliged to run, and Lieutenant King was unfortunately shot through the heart.

That night we bivouacked, and, expecting an attack, made breastworks with our tents and large stones, of which the whole valley was full. Everyone slept with his arms by his side; but the night passed off quietly. We were to have

attacked the fort of the chief of the Gilzaees, near Teyzeen, but he sent in his submission and gave hostages for his observance of the terms granted him. Macgregor was satisfied with the arrangement, and the attack was countermanded. We halted two days, in hopes of recovering the camels and baggage lost in the Huft Kothul defile, but as these hopes were disappointed, Sale ordered the 37th, with three companies of sappers and half the mountain train, back to Kubber-Jubber to await the arrival from Cabool of the 54th N.I. with the envoy, who would bring out more cattle. There might have been reasons against such a proceeding of which I know nothing, but it struck me at the time that we ought to have made the chief of Teyzeen restore our cattle before we relinquished the attack on his fort. The winter was at hand, and in the dread of so terrible a blow as the loss of it would have inflicted he could not have resisted our demand. Taking all the camels he could from the 37th, on the morning of the 26th Sale marched for Seh Baba, with a force consisting of Abbott's battery—five 9-pounders, and one 24-pound howitzer; half of mountain train, 3-pounders, three guns, H.M.'s 13th L.I. and 35th N.I.; five companies Broadfoot's sappers, a squadron 5th light cavalry, and a squadron of Shah Soojah's horse. The march to Seh Baba was quiet enough until the

rear-guard got within three miles of camp, when it was assailed by hundreds of Gilzaecs, with whom a sharp skirmish was maintained. They came on in such numbers and so near that the guns were turned on them before they could be checked. These skirmishes with the enemy, though comparatively insignificant in themselves, became serious from the numbers of men they cost us, for though the loss was in most cases small, yet in time it swelled to a formidable total, encumbered our march with a large number of wounded, and compelled us to abandon a considerable amount of baggage in order to transport them. In the present instance, our loss was very small.

Four miles from Jugdulluck the road divides into two branches, the left branch leading through the Purrec Durra Pass, the most level and by far the easiest road for marching, but commanded by lofty hills that tower immediately over it; the right branch is more difficult from its abrupt ascents and descents, but shorter and much more open. As soon as we could see the hills over the pass, our glasses showed us that they were swarming with Gilzaces, and as the defile throughout its whole length is commanded within easy musket-shot, Sale suddenly turned off by the right branch and completely outmanœuvred our vigilant enemies, who hoped to make an easy prey

of us, as we threaded our way through this most formidable defile. I commanded the rear-guard this day, and had orders to destroy any baggage and ammunition that might be dropped on the road. The necessity of obeying this order delayed us a good deal, and gave time for parties of the Gilzaees to cross over from the hills above the Purree Durra Pass, so that, when within two miles of the camp, hundreds of the fellows were howling about us, mad with rage at Sale having avoided them, and still more mad when they saw us deliberately destroying everything that had been dropped. They closed in on us, taking advantage of every ravine, hillock, and big stone, and kept up a serious and damaging fire, during which Captain Jennings, of the 13th, and several men were wounded.

Captain Backhouse, of the mountain train, at length seeing his opportunity, treated them to a shell or two from the howitzer, which made them keep their distance. As soon as we had destroyed the baggage which had been dropped, we retired slowly before the enemy, and with a few more casualties reached the old fort above our camp at Jugdulluck, where, as the Gilzaees still followed us, I remained until relieved from camp at a quarter past three.

The hills that overhang the Purree Durra Pass take a sweep round to the right, and join by a low

neck another and smaller range, from which a branch strikes off towards Jugdulluck. This branch, and the lower slopes of the Purree Durra hills, form the Jugdulluck pass, which crosses the low neck just mentioned. Jugdulluck itself is a large open space in a basin formed by the hills, and is overlooked by the old fort, which is again commanded by the hills, at the base of which lies the road by which we had arrived. From this basin the road gradually ascends towards the neck, winding through a dark gully, which narrows gradually, until at one point near the neck there is barely room for two laden camels to pass abreast.

On the hill immediately above this spot the Gilzaees swarmed in great numbers. As we approached they opened a heavy fire on us, and from the character of the overture we could guess the nature of the piece intended to be played.

When the advanced guard discovered the enemy and came into contact with them, word was sent back to the general, who ordered a halt, and sent up parties to attack and drive off the Gilzaees, and keep them in check; but instead of moving on the column as soon as the flankers began to push the enemy, we continued to halt, trying to get a gun to bear on them, though told by Captain Abbott that such an expedient was impracticable. This detained us for an hour and

a half, wearying the cattle, trying the patience of the men, and giving confidence to the enemy, who believed they had decidedly checked us. At length the order was given, and we moved on, finding that there was nothing to stop us, and that 200 paces from where we halted the enemy's fire would be totally without effect against us. The top of the pass was soon gained, but the General, instead of taking up a position here, until the rear-guard was close at hand, and then leaving a strong support for them, went on at such a pace that I could not help remarking on it to our colonel. We moved on at this rapid rate for several miles, and at length halted at a little stream, where we allowed the men to refresh themselves, and gave the baggage time to come up.

During our halt here, a report was brought from the rear, that the rear-guard had been destroyed and a large amount of baggage captured. Colonel Monteath was immediately ordered back with the 35th, to support the column that had been attacked. We mustered some twenty-five old sepoys and sixty recruits; the rest of the regiment had been detached on guards and flanking parties. As we went back we collected all the men we could, about 150, and soon got intelligence of the rear-guard, the account being more or less terrible, according to the temperament or inventive faculties of the different narrators. About two and a half miles from where we halted, we

saw the rear-guard coming on, followed by the enemy, with whom they were exchanging shots. Our arrival stopped all further pursuit, and the Affghans retired after a little skirmishing, which did us no harm. Then I learnt the tale of the day's disaster—for disaster it was—seeing that, but for mismanagement, we need not have lost a dozen men, whereas my regiment alone lost in this affair two officers and forty-six men, killed and wounded. Among the former was Captain Wyndham, and Lieutenant Coombes was one of the latter. It appears that when the column under Sale moved on, the skirmishers by some mistake were withdrawn. The Gilzaees instantly came on again, and seeing our rear-guard with much baggage entangled in the gully, they boldly descended by the ravines, and falling on them, engaged in a regular hand-to-hand fight. Cooped up in a narrow place, not thirty feet wide, discipline was of little use, and great confusion ensued, for the men were fired into both from the gully and from the rocks above. By a miracle the gun horses were unwounded, and the two guns were extricated. Had one horse fallen whilst in the narrow part of the pass, the guns must have been abandoned. Our soldiers were dropping fast, and the Gilzaees, increasing in numbers, became every moment more daring. A party of twenty men, however, got on a ledge

over the gully, on the side opposite the Gilzaees, and firing down among them made them draw back a little, and our guard was thus extricated. Poor Captain Wyndham, seeing a soldier of the 13th badly wounded, got off his pony and placed the disabled soldier on it. As the Captain was himself lame, he could not keep pace with the men who were hurrying up the steep and stony gully, and, to our great regret, was killed, and could not be brought off. He was an amiable man and excellent officer, and was much regretted by all, but by me especially, as I greatly esteemed him, and we had lived together very comfortably and happily when at Meerut.

We reached camp at Soorkhab at dusk. As soon as I arrived I was ordered with my company on picket duty, to the top of a hill just over the camp; so, getting a morsel to eat, and some entrenching tools, I started, and by ten o'clock had made a snug breastwork for my party. A few shots were fired at us during the night, which served to keep us on the *qui-vive*, and deprived us of a good deal of the rest we so much needed. With this exception the night passed quietly. At Gundummuck was a station of the Shah's troops, a regiment of infantry (Kyberries) and a regiment of horse (Janbaz)[1] both

[1] "Jan baz," two Persian words, signifying "to wager the life"—men of reckless courage.

commanded by English officers. Here we halted three days, to destroy the fort of Mamoo Khail, belonging to some disaffected chief. On our return from that expedition, news of a doubtful character reached us from Cabool, but on the 11th November we marched to the neighbourhood of Futteabad. We bivouacked, but just as we were about to lie down for the night, we were alarmed by the sound of sharp firing, opened by our picket, in the direction of Gundummuck. The firing, which soon ceased, was followed by loud shouting, which we found proceeded from the Khyberrie regiment, who, with their English officers, had come in from Gundummuck.

After we had left, the Janbazes had broken out in open mutiny, and had tried to kill the English officers, but the Khyberries defended them as long as they could, and then brought them off, leaving their all, to be plundered or destroyed by the Janbaz.

It was now evident to us all that the whole country had risen against us; and even we, who were not behind the curtain, and knew nothing but what we could see for ourselves, were quite aware that this was not a mere rising of the Gilzaee chiefs to get their subsidies restored. We had fought every inch of the ground, from our first camp at Bootkhak to our present one. At every step our enemies increased in numbers

and audacity; and we felt sure we should have to fight our way to Jellalabad, which we heard was to be our destination. When Sale became aware that there was a general rising in the country, he contemplated putting all our sick and wounded (of whom we had now a large number) with all our tents and baggage, into some fort, marching rapidly back on Cabool, quelling the insurrection, and then returning as rapidly with the envoy. But our stock of provisions was found to be utterly inadequate to take us back to Cabool and to supply the sick and wounded, and the guard to be left for their protection during the time we might possibly be absent. Our carriage cattle, of which we had lost so many by the treachery of the enemy, and by fatigue and disease, were barely enough to help us to struggle on to Jellalabad. Moreover, to leave our sick and wounded in any fort would be to deliberately sacrifice them, for the moment our backs were turned they would be besieged by the whole country; therefore Sale determined to make for Jellalabad, seize and fortify the town, and hold it as a support for our troops at Cabool.

The rear-guard was always composed of the night-pickets, and quarter and rear-guards going off duty. As soon as the baggage was all packed, and the column about to start, a few notes of the bugle called in the pickets, and on the rear-

guard being formed it left the ground, following the baggage. The morning we marched from our bivouac near Futteabad, Colonel Dennie was ordered to take command of the rear-guard, as we expected some warm work. As soon as the bugle called in the pickets, numbers of Affghans started up as if by magic from behind every rock, boulder, hillock, bush, or tuft of grass within half a mile of the camp, forming a vast semicircle of enemies. The moment the rear-guard moved off the ground the Affghans began to ply their long juzzails; leaving the cover of the rocks, coming down the hills, and boldly closing in on every side, in a manner they had never before ventured to do. As we approached the village of Futteabad, the enemy rapidly increased in numbers, coming in swarms down the hill sides, while troops of them pressed along the top towards some point further on.

At the village of Futteabad, seated on low walls, on banks, and by the road side, were scores of fine, strong, well-made young men, disarmed, and apparently innocent spectators, drawn together to witness an unusual sight; but our suspicions were raised by their numbers, which were quite disproportioned to the size of the village; and from our seeing no women about, we came to the conclusion that juzzails and swords were not far off, and that mischief was intended.

When we had passed the village we found that we had debouched into a wide, undulating, stony plain, with large sandy levels here and there. The horizon all round was closed in by lofty mountains covered with snow. On our right hand lay the low hills from which we had just emerged—long, low waves of rock, their base dotted here and there with scrubby bushes. To our left was the Cabool river, distant about a mile; its banks, thickly studded with forts and villages, and surrounded by gardens, orchards, and fields, could be traced far up a long and fertile valley. Behind us, immediately in our rear, was Futteabad, and close to it, coming from the direction of the valley behind us, was a considerable body of men, whose numbers, as they reached Futteabad, were swelled by the innocent-looking spectators, who had disappeared the moment we passed the village.

The rear-guard this day consisted of about three hundred and fifty men from the 13th, and my regiment, one hundred of Broadfoot's sappers, two nine-pounder guns, two mountain-train guns, and a weak squadron of the 5th light cavalry; a mere speck amongst the thousands of the enemy. Our line of march lay along the base of the range of hills on our right. We had scarcely got the distance of two hundred yards beyond Futteabad, when three shots were fired

from it, which appeared to be signals to the men on the hills and along the base, for they immediately attacked the skirmishers thrown out to protect our flank. Encouraged by their overwhelming numbers, they pressed so heavily on our skirmishers that Colonel Dennie was obliged to reinforce them, and to bring our guns into play. A few well-planted shells made the enemy hesitate, but checked at one point they came on at another, and encouraging each other with frantic yells, descended from the hills to close in upon us. As soon as we began to retire steadily and in regular skirmishing order, runners were sent by the enemy from village to village, calling upon the people to turn out and assist in the destruction of the infidels. We could see them as they ran waving their turbans, could perceive hundreds turning out in answer to the appeal, and could hear the gathering cry—"Ya Ullah, Ya Ullah!" rolling along the valley.

It was this disparity of numbers, our compact order making it appear still greater, that gave such confidence to the enemy.

The body of men who came up behind Futteabad now began to take part in the fray, but the two nine-pounders and the mountain-train guns kept them in check and prevented them from closing in on us.

Steadily and deliberately Dennie retired in

regular skirmishing order, halting occasionally to check the enemy with a shot or two from the guns. After every halt they came on again with louder shouts and increased boldness, apparently only waiting for the hundreds from the villages on the left to come up, and make a general rush at us from all sides.

As the fellows in the rear pressed on, the mountain-train guns were unlimbered and loaded, drag-ropes were attached to the trails, and they were drawn along, so that at any sudden rush by the enemy they could be primed and fired in four seconds. When the enemy from the left came on, the fire on the right and rear warmed up, our men dropped fast, and we were preparing for a desperate struggle, when a cloud of dust was seen a-head, and presently Lieutenant Mayne galloped up with a squadron of the Shah's horse, sent by Sale to see what was the matter, for the sound of our guns and musketry had reached him. Mayne's arrival put a different aspect on affairs. Colonel Dennie now formed up the infantry and mountain-train guns, and advanced with the cavalry and nine-pounders to check the enemy. A few shots from the guns and the sight of the cavalry immediately effected his object, and the Affghans drew back a little; so, giving the word to retire, the guns limbered up, and Dennie returned with them to join the

infantry. Once more put in motion we started at a brisk pace, but finding that the cavalry had not followed, Dennie looked round, and to his great amazement saw them forming into line fronting the enemy. On perceiving this he halted the infantry, and galloped up, calling out, "Mayne, Oldfield, what are you about?"

"Going to *C-H-A-A-R-G-E*," was the reply. And at the word, down swept the cavalry on the Affghans at full speed. At the same moment, with three tremendous cheers, we changed front and advanced at the double in support. Dennie could not help himself, and was obliged to let us have our way and our revenge. We halted in a convenient spot, and strained our eyes to observe the cavalry; but all we could see was a tremendous cloud of dust, through which, every now and then, came a glitter of swords, like flashes of lightning. Presently, however, troops of horsemen emerged here and there from the mêlée, and dashed amongst the fugitives, rolling them over on the ground, and then again entered the clouds of dust which obscured everything.

The enemy were now routed, and flying in every direction in the wildest disorder, their triumphant taunting cries turned into shouts of terror and yells of agony. Swords, juzzails, turbans, and clothing were all cast away to facilitate flight. But it was too late; for the cavalry were

amongst them, with vengeful hearts and remorseless swords, our skirmishers at the same time playing their parts—firing into the groups of fugitives with steady and successful aim, and picking off numbers as they laboured up the slope of the hills.

Dennie now sent peremptory orders recalling the cavalry, and as our officers, too prudent and knowing to follow the enemy too far, had slackened the pursuit as soon as the latter were fairly broken and dispersed, they returned, drew up, and re-formed in a field on the Jellalabad side of Futteabad.

The skirmishers, too, had been recalled, the column was re-formed, and we joined the cavalry. A halt was now made in order to get one of the cavalry horses out of a deep water-channel, into which it had fallen. The channel was about five feet deep and two and a half wide, so that we were obliged to dig him out. Horses were so scarce we could not abandon him.

In the field where we halted were numerous stacks of fodder. Some of the men roaming about observed a pair of shoes sticking out of one; and upon inspection, a pair of feet were found in the shoes. The owner was instantly pulled out, and as he was found to be one of the fugitive enemy, he was at once cut down. In revenge for the shots fired at us from the village,

as quick as thought, every stack was fired. They were filled with the enemy, many of whom were miserably burnt.

Whilst our horse was being dug out, some one accidentally discovered one of the enemy concealed beneath the reeds that overhung the channel. Every channel, and there were many, was then minutely searched, and several men were found, who were put to death before we could interfere. The soldiers could not forget, and would not forgive, the indignities shown to the body of our poor comrade Wyndham, at Jugdulluck. The Affghans had cut off the head and set it up for a mark to throw stones at! I should mention that, through the means of the chief of Gundummuck, we recovered the head and body of our poor comrade, and gave them Christian burial.

As soon as the horse was got out, we marched merrily off for Jellalabad, and reached it without further noticeable adventure.

CHAPTER IX.

Jellalabad—Council of War—Decides to occupy the Towns —Take Stock of Commissariat—Surrounded by the Enemy —Sortie 14th November—Beat off the Enemy — They Disperse — Commence to Repair Fortifications — Mode Adopted—Quarters—Kaffiristan—Garrison Duty—Enemy Gathering Again—A Tremendous Explosion—Turn out the Garrison — A Laugh—Sortie 1st December — Enemy Beaten and Dispersed—"Shahbash,' Angrez"— Effects of Victory—Evil Tidings—Set up a Still—Elphinstone's Capitulation, and Order to us—Disregarded— Khyberries Dismissed—Ditch round the Town Commenced.

JELLALABAD is a walled town, situated in the Ningrahar valley, on the right bank of the Cabool river. The upper or western end of the valley is very fertile and picturesque, thickly studded with forts and villages, but immediately round the city, and far away to the south and south-east, it is sandy and arid. The valley is closed in on all sides by lofty mountains, those of Kaffiristan to the north, and the Sooféd Kōh to the south, being covered with snow. To the north of the town, at a distance of six hundred yards, runs the Cabool river. The intervening space is low and swampy, filled with large patches of reeds, and occasionally there

are level pieces of turf. The town is built on the high bank, under which was evidently the old bed through which the river ran, within one hundred and seventy yards of the walls. The bank is from twenty to twenty-five feet high, extending from a considerable distance above the town to several miles below. Close to Jellalabad it is full of deep ravines, that run up within a few yards of the walls, providing ready-made approaches for an enemy, and dangerous to the safety of the place.

South of Jellalabad, at a distance of one thousand two hundred yards, is a low range of limestone hills, and opposite the south-west angle bastion, at a distance of two hundred yards, several small hills of gneiss crop up abruptly out of the ground, completely overlooking the interior of the town, and enfilading the long western curtains. Two hundred and fifty yards south of Jellalabad were remains of the old walls, now in ruins, and covered with drifted sand, forming a long low mound which affords cover for an enemy. All round the town and up to the very foot of the walls were houses, mosques, old forts, gardens filled with trees and shrubs, and surrounded by thick mud walls; in fact, every species of cover that an enemy could desire. A little beyond the south-east angle of the city was the residency-house compound, surrounded by a low brick wall, and

adjoining, it and under the walls, was the King's garden-house.

The walls of the town were two thousand one hundred yards in extent, exclusive of thirty-three bastions. Not a yard of the fortifications was in even moderate repair; in every direction they were broken and ruinous, in many places not more than nine feet high, and easily scaled. I saw men get up at the re-entering angles bastion near the south gate. On three-fourths of the walls there was not a vestige of parapet, and most of the bastions sloped down towards the outside (from the gorge to the salient). A ditch apparently had never been thought of; and through breaches in the walls, laden cattle and droves of asses went in and out daily. Altogether, a more ruinous, tumble-down place for a small isolated garrison never was seen, and could scarcely be imagined.

Into this town, on the evening of the 12th November, 1841, wearied, jaded, footsore, hungry, short of ammunition, a treasure-chest nearly empty, and with only two days' provisions in store, Sale's brigade entered, to undertake the desperate task of defending it against the whole power of the country, the people of which not only detested us as invaders, but looked on us, with fanatical hatred, as infidels whom it was a merit utterly to root out and destroy. At a distance of six hundred miles from our own fron-

tier, with the formidable defiles of the Khyber and the whole of the Panjaub to cross before we could reach it, what would be our condition if Runjeet Sing should refuse to allow another army to traverse his territories? In case of disaster at Cabool, it would indeed be hopeless to look for help, which without Runjeet's good-will could only come to us through the Bolan Pass.

In the meantime, these ruinous walls were better than the open plain, and our duty was to make the best of our position, to "lick" the Affghans if we could, and by our operations to give support to our troops at Cabool. So, after viewing the walls, Sale marched the brigade in, and took possession of the town, the inhabitants of which fled out at one side as we entered at the other. The troops were told off to different posts, and after having got something to eat, we lay down with our arms by our sides, ready for any event.

While the troops were recruiting their exhausted energies, and making themselves as comfortable as our scanty means would admit, the chiefs assembled in council to debate on the plan of operations most suitable under the singular circumstances of our position. There was no dissentient voice as to the absolute necessity of holding Jellalabad at all risks until spring, or at least until orders should reach us; the question was, whether we should hold the

whole town, or only the Bala Hissar, which was not a lofty interior castle, as its name implies, and as in most fortified towns in Affghanistan it is, but merely the south-east corner of the city, walled in for the use of the sovereigns of Cabool, when they made this their winter residence. Happily for the garrison, the boldest hearts prevailed, the council deciding to hold the whole town, and to commence at once the heavy task of making the walls defensible.

The state of the commissariat, which was far from satisfactory, was at once taken into consideration. Our supply of provisions was so low that the troops had to be put on half, and the camp-followers on quarter rations. It was a terrible privation to men who were working hard night and day; but much as all suffered, no one complained, for all recognised the prudence of the measure, and cheerfully acquiesced in it. The ammunition was looked to, and the alarming discovery made, that in all we had only one hundred and twenty rounds per man. As the whole population of the town had fled, instant measures were taken to search for and secure all grain, flour, pulse, and food of every description, and in a few hours supplies for several days were collected, in which interval we should have time to secure a more ample stock of provisions, either by purchase or by "the strong hand."

When the morning of the 13th broke, large parties of Affghans were seen on the low hills, south of the town, and as the day advanced, they came swarming up the rocky heights at its south-west angle, and commenced firing on our sentries. Ere evening, we found ourselves surrounded by a force of many thousands of the enemy. On the eastern side of the town were long ranges of grass huts and sheds of all kinds, the cantonments of the Shah's troops, to which the enemy at once set fire, dancing round them and howling like savages. We ourselves had not been idle all this time, and, besides securing all the food in the town, quarters were assigned to officers and men, sentinals were placed at the different gates, alarm-posts were established, and stations on the walls were appointed for guards and sentries. But the great question was how to shelter these sentries on a wall where, as there was no parapet, they were constantly exposed to the fire of a watchful enemy in the gardens and houses below, not thirty yards off—a point of some difficulty, which was happily solved by the ingenuity of Major Broadfoot, our garrison engineer, who was famous for his readiness in devising such expedients.

Hundreds of camel saddles were ranged, two deep and two high, at certain required places on the walls, forming a tolerable protection for

the guards lying behind them. The sentries, however, were obliged to kneel down, as, except for one or two places, there was not a sufficient number to make shelter for them when they stood erect. These saddles, which are composed of two very large thick pads of straw, covered with stout sacking, two feet six inches long and one foot six inches wide, with a double fork of wood at each end, and transverse sticks below the forks, formed an excellent substitute when better means of protection were not to be found.

Whilst the enemy were burning down the cantonments, a party of them, who came under our observation, seemed pertinaciously bent on getting into a small mosque in a ruined serai at the end of the town, a circumstance which could not but excite our attention and awaken our curiosity. A party of our sappers was accordingly sent out, under Major Broadfoot, in order to examine the place and see what it contained. The result was the discovery of a quantity of carbine ammunition, which was instantly secured, and proved a timely and welcome supply.

As soon as it was dusk, the ever-vigilant enemy, creeping through the gardens and behind the old houses and walls, fired on our sentries, or at their temporary defences, and an officer and several men were wounded. Far

into the night we could hear their wild yells, their execrations, and threats of extermination. A little after midnight, however, as is usual with these people, they withdrew, and our wearied soldiers were permitted to sink into rest.

At early dawn, Sale having determined on a sortie, we were all aroused without sound of bugle or summons of any kind. A column of about seven hundred infantry, all the cavalry, and two guns, were placed under the command of Colonel Monteath, with orders to sally out at sunrise and attack the Affghans. Ascending to the roof of the loftiest house in the town, from whence a perfect view all round was obtained, the colonel took a good survey of the ground, which, from such an elevation, presented several points of interest. The rocky hills at the south-west angle of the town were occupied by the enemy, large masses of whom were marching along the low hills to the south, while others were coming over the plain from all directions. The gardens under the walls were already occupied by them, and a body of horsemen was seen coming from the west. Altogether, the number of men assembled could not have been fewer than six thousand. When the colonel had made his survey, he gave a few clear orders, and the columns, after having formed in the main

streets, were ordered to march, and issued rapidly by the south and west gates. The Affhgans had already commenced operations by attacking the Khyberries, who were encamped in the residency grounds at the south-east angle of the town; but the cavalry, who had been encamped in the Shah's garden, adjoining the residency grounds, filed out, and attacking those who had fallen on the Khyberries, cut down a considerable number of them, after which they got out into the plain, beyond the old walls of Jellalabad. In the meantime, our columns of infantry advanced under a heavy fire to attack the enemy on the rocky hills at the south-west angle of the city. Some pretty sharp firing was interchanged. The Affghans on the hill were excited by a fellow who played an instrument that sounded like a bagpipe. He was, in fact, the piper of the tribe, and a resolute fellow he evidently was, for he stood fire most bravely, doing all he could to encourage his people. But resistance was of no avail to the enemy, who recoiled before our rush, and were scattered in all directions, just as the cavalry galloped into the plain, and charged the body of horse I have already mentioned, who were no other than the traitorous Janbazees, rolled them over, and then, falling on the fugitive foot soldiers, pursued them to the low hills to the south of the town, their rout being complete.

Wherever a mass of fugitives were seen, the shot from Abbott's guns ploughed through them, or the cavalry charged and cut them down. By ten o'clock it was all over. Two hundred of the enemy were left dead on the hill and near the old walls, while many more were killed in the pursuit, the remainder being totally dispersed. The panic in the whole valley was so great that the forts lately occupied by the Affghans were immediately abandoned, and we seized the opportunity to secure all the grain and fodder they contained. In honour of the piper who stood his ground so bravely, and tried to rally his countrymen when they fled before our charge, the soldiers called the little rocky hill—the scene of this victory—Piper's Hill.

Two great results were obtained by this fortunate victory—it gave us a little breathing-time, and we had a few days of uninterrupted quiet to put our walls in a defensible state, and destroy some of the cover nearest to the fortifications.

The people of the valley, seeing we were too dangerous to be trifled with, adopted the usual oriental policy of trying to keep well with both parties, and sent in some supplies of food. Men came in daily with donkey-loads of flour, wheat, and various things, and on the 20th we got in 120 camel-loads of wheat—which alone was

a supply for the whole garrison for fifteen days, at full rations.

Immediately the enemy were beaten off, working parties were told off—some to clear away the rubbish, accumulated at the foot of each breach, others to destroy houses, and of the material build parapets on the walls to protect our guards and sentries. The bastions and most exposed places were first commenced, so that our sentries might at once have cover, and our guns be mounted to protect the weakest points.

The whole of the small houses in the town were built of tempered clay, layer upon layer. When destroyed, they broke up into large clods, sometimes weighing several hundredweight. These clods were built into walls and ramparts, as rough stone is used in England.

Large parties were constantly sent to destroy the houses, buildings, ruins, and gardens outside, for, next to providing cover for our own people, the most important point was to deprive our enemy of it.

Anyone with the slightest military experience, or who has handled a rifle at Wimbledon, or on any of our rifle ranges, will understand the vital importance to us of getting rid at once of everything within range that would shelter a rifleman, for, with the enemy's marksmen so near, it was not only impossible for our sentries to

mount the walls, but no one could look over or show a cap, or a portion of clothing, without getting a shot through it. What would one of our riflemen do with an enemy's head exposed within fifty yards of him?

The town of Jellalabad, as described in Major Broadfoot's report, is an irregular quadrilateral, having half the western side salient, and the southern side broken by a deep re-entering angle. The whole city was built of sun-dried bricks or clay, and the walls, as usual, were of the same material.

There were two main streets running through the town, crossing each other at right angles, and in the direction of the cardinal points. These terminated in gates, which were defended by bastions, but without traverses or any works to prevent cannon-shot from coming in at one gate and going out at the opposite. The other streets, or rather lanes, were narrow, tortuous, and filthy.

From its fine name, Jellal-abad (the abode of splendour), and from being the winter residence of a court, we expected to have found at least a neat town, filled with tolerable houses and buildings. Jellalabad was the very opposite of this—squalid and mean, with not more than half a dozen tolerable houses in it, exclusive of the King's.

Outside the town, on the eastern side, and at the south-east angle, was an old ruined brick serai, in which, after the first night, our cavalry encamped for some days. To the south of this was the residency compound, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter; and to the west of the residency was the King's garden, the gate of which was exactly opposite a small wicket in the south wall, not many feet from the south-east bastion. I have said that the Bala Hissar was nothing more than the south-east corner of the town walled in. Here were the King's palace, his harem, his stables, buildings for his attendants, and the houses of his confidential officers.

The harem was allotted to the officers, and the stable-yard to the men of my regiment. The yard was a fine open square, with an immense tree in it, and there was room for the men to pitch some tents. It was in the south-east angle of the Hissar, and comprised a portion of the southern and eastern walls. The wicket already mentioned was about the centre of our square. The officers of H.M. 13th got the King's palace, a large but very ordinary house, and the men of the 13th were put into numerous buildings just outside the harem wall to the west. The gate of the harem opened into our own square, so we were close to our men. The trees were

cut down, the houses destroyed, the garden walls levelled, the holes filled up, the walls and bastions of the town repaired, and parapets built all round the walls. I should mention that the cavalry were brought into the town shortly after the sortie, houses and walls were levelled to make open spaces for the horses, the clods and lumps of hard clay from them being used up in building our parapets. Perhaps I should explain, for the benefit of my lady readers, should I be so far honoured as to have any, that the parapet is that part of the walls or fort behind which the garrison stand to fire. A wicket to the right of the bastion forming the south-eastern angle opened into our square, a tower on the wall just beyond being the post of my company. There was another bastion to the extreme right forming the south-west angle of the wall, and a third to the extreme left forming the north-east angle. Piper's Hill, to which we have referred, was situated about two hundred yards to the south-west of the south gate. In front of the wicket mentioned above were the ruins of the King's house and garden; and to the left of these the house and grounds of the envoy. In the background we had a view of the Kohinoor mountains, in Kaffristan. It may interest my readers to know that the inhabitants of these mountains are believed to be the descendants of the Greeks who garrisoned and

colonised Affghanistan; they have perfectly fair complexions and the Grecian type of face, and all their implements and household utensils are totally different from those commonly used by the Affghans.

The garrison duty was managed in this way:—Sale told off to my regiment, as our particular charge, the walls of the town between the eastern gate and the south-west angle bastion. H.M. 13th and the sappers took the rest. We had a captain on duty every day at the south gate, or a senior subaltern acting as such, who had command of all the guards and sentries along the walls in our division. The 13th had a captain at the north gate, and subalterns at the east and west gates. At all the four gates there were mixed guards of soldiers and sepoys; and every night a picket of one hundred men, of H.M. 13th, under a captain and a subaltern, was sent to the centre of the town, where the main streets crossed each other, to be ready to reinforce the guard of any part that might be suddenly attacked.

The moment the Affghans were driven off by our sortie, our defensive works were commenced and pushed on with the greatest vigour. No one was allowed to be idle; officers and men, with spade, pickaxe, billhook, felling-axe, or mining tools in hand, were at work from daybreak to

sunset. The value of a perfect division of labour being well known, some were set to work to fell trees and cut them into lengths for roofing, or faggots for firing; others were ordered to knock down houses and walls; and others to carry the clods and lumps of clay on to the walls for building our parapets, on which the sappers were employed. The timbers of destroyed houses were stacked in the engineers' yard, with a view to building barracks, and all the old iron and nails were carefully collected. But first of all, the rubbish at the foot of each breach was cleared away and the breaches were built up; then the bastions were repaired, guards put in them, platforms laid down, and the guns mounted on them at once. Simultaneously with this work, storehouses were made in which to collect all the grain and flour we could get, and Macgregor, our political agent, exerted himself very successfully amongst the neighbouring chiefs to get these storehouses filled.

At this time, parties of Affghans continued to hover about, but they never dared to molest us. Occasionally a few men would approach the walls at night, take a shot at the sentries, see what we had been about, and then be off again before midnight; but they were never in any numbers, and apparently came more as spies; and, as

strong detachments of cavalry went out every day with our grass-cutters, these small parties only served to show us our vulnerable points, to keep us on the *qui-vive*, and to spur us up to our work.

On the 21st we received bad news from several quarters. The little fort of Pesh Bolak (half way between Jellalabad and the Khyber), which was garrisoned by a body of Juzzailchees, under Captain Ferris, had been besieged by the Affghans, and Captain Ferris had been obliged to evacuate it. He had been seen with his officers going over the mountains by a scarcely practicable path towards Peshawer. Then from Cabool we heard that Shah Soojah was shut up in the Bala Hissar, and our troops in their fortified cantonment, by the insurgents; that there was a general rising of the whole country; that Ghuznee was beleaguered, and that the road between Bovtkhah and Gundummuck was closed by the Gilzaees, who had stationed parties at every point by which a messenger could reach us; so that men with letters for us were obliged to take a road round.

But these evil tidings only served to redouble our efforts, to infuse fresh vigour into our hands and spirit into our hearts, and to make us more watchful, more wary, more determined and patient. We were not long without warning that the Affghans would very shortly measure their

strength with ours. During the night, small parties of the enemy crossed the river from the north side, ensconced themselves in the reeds on the swampy ground below the town, and cut off several of our unwary grass-cutters and people. Shortly after, they began to creep round the town, in the evening just after dusk, and fire at our sentries. This they could easily do with impunity; for, with all our diligence, there was still a vast amount of cover outside the walls, in the shape of ravines, mounds of ruins not yet sloped off, ditches, and old forts that we had not yet touched.

During the 27th, a large body of men with a red standard was descried moving westward along the low hills to the south, and was traced to a fort two and a half miles from Jellalabad. On the 28th, several bodies of men were seen going westward along the north bank of the river, but no interruption was offered to our working parties, that went out as usual to destroy old buildings and level the ground outside the fort. Every man went out armed, and before commencing work, sentries were posted at the most commanding spots, besides which a portion of the party always kept on their accoutrements. A bright look-out was kept on the walls, and the artillery were always ready at their guns in case of need. We now began to destroy the old forts outside Jella-

labad, and a tough job it proved; but as there are more ways of killing a dog than by hanging him, so there are more ways of destroying an Indian fort than by spade and pick, or by gunpowder, which, by-the-bye, we could not spare.

At twelve o'clock on the night of the 28th there was a tremendous report, like the firing of a heavy gun, in the direction of the fort occupied by the enemy. The alarm was instantly sounded, and in two minutes every man was at his post. I was captain of the day, so hurried off to learn what "all the row was about." I found Sale and his staff in the west gate, looking earnestly in the direction of the enemy, and discussing with the heroic Havelock the probabilities of an attack. It was a bright moonlight night, everything visible for a long distance. All at once some one called out, "Here they come, sir. Don't you see those two dark columns of men five hundred yards off?" Ah, yes—everyone saw them. I looked a little, and then laughed right out. The General called to me in his short, sharp way—

"S——, what is it, sir?"

"General, where is the back wall of the old fort?"

"Eh, eh—what—what?"

"Why, General, you sent me out yesterday to destroy the back wall of that old fort, behind

which the enemy used to assemble—the clay was so hard we could make very little impression on it; so, as the wall was just over a sunk road, and the bank below the wall soft, I threw a dam across the lower part of the road, and turned in the little stream before we left off work. It has softened the bank, and the wall has fallen with a slap into the water, and produced the explosion; the columns of men are the shadows of the north and south walls." And so it was—the wall was so effectually destroyed that Sale was well pleased, and henceforth I was constantly employed in practising similar tactics against other old ruins.

That the Affghans were about to attack us again we had now the most indisputable sign—the people of the neighbouring villages ceased to bring in provisions. This was a serious matter, for we had not more than thirty days' supply in store; and as we were more likely to surrender for want of provisions than from any other cause, the cutting off, even for a time, of our daily supply, was looked upon with much anxiety. Our chief and his political officer strained every nerve to fill our storehouses; and just at this time a most fortunate discovery was made of a quantity of grain at a place three miles to the east of Jellalabad. As this was in the opposite direction to that in which the enemy

was assembling, a strong party with camels and sacks was sent out to collect and bring it in.

Whilst the men were engaged in putting up the wheat a party of the enemy crossed the river unperceived, and carried off five of the camels that had strayed down to the banks; but the cavalry vidette discovered it in time, the camels were rescued, and the whole of the wheat was brought in.

This afternoon another considerable body of men was seen moving along the low hills to the south of Jellalabad, and was observed to go to the same fort as those on the 27th. In the evening the body of a poor grass-cutter was found dreadfully mangled, and with both hands cut off. At night our sentries were fired at frequently from all sides. Taken together, these signs showed that a crisis was at hand.

At noon on the 29th two large masses of men were seen moving down on Jellalabad in regular order, and by two o'clock the ruins of the old fort and the ravines on the west and river sides of Jellalabad were occupied by about four thousand men, to join whom more were coming in from all quarters. They seemed carefully to avoid the south side, where they suffered so severely on the 14th. Their intention appeared to be to operate on the west side only, from Piper's Hill to the ravines at the north-west angle, where the cavalry could

not so readily get at them, and where the ruins, not yet levelled down, and the remains of old forts and buildings, would afford them shelter and a line of posts to cut off our supplies from the upper and fertile end of the valley. They calculated that if they could shut us in for a few days the whole country would rise and join them, and we should then be cooped up and starved into a surrender.

Fortunately, we had paid particular attention to that side of the town, so that, although a good deal of cover still existed, the enemy did not find so many convenient gardens, walls, and ruins to shelter them from our fire as they expected, and were obliged to occupy Piper's Hill and the ravines close to the north-west angle, which we had not been able to lay open, and to make the best of the mounds of ruins not yet levelled down, that lay between those two points.

A report having got about that the enemy were driving a mine under our north-west angle bastion, on the night of the 30th, a party was sent out under Captain Fenwick, H.M. 63rd, to examine the ground. The enemy had retired, and nothing was found. Towards morning it rained heavily; our sepoys had neither great coats nor tents, and as many were entirely without shelter, they got miserably wet. Fortunately the morning was fine and warm, or we should

have had half of them laid up with fever. We were building sheds for them; but timber was scarce, and our other work so heavy, that the sheds got on but slowly.

When Sale told off to my regiment the south and part of the eastern sides of the town as our particular charge, the officers got a little room fitted up near the south gate as an officers' guard-room. It was a central situation, and most convenient. I was on guard every third day. Though the duty was hard, it was comparatively a day of rest. During the night we visited our guards and sentries every two hours, and at odd times made the sentries report everything they had seen or heard. We patrolled the streets, too, in our quarters every two hours, sometimes more frequently. Besides this, the picket in the centre of the town sent patrols to each gate every hour during the night, so that there was no lack of vigilance. Every day, when not on special duty, I went out with a large working party to destroy the old walls and houses outside the town, to fell and cut up the trees, and to bring them in for fire-wood; and whilst the enemy was before the town, every night I slept on the walls at the head of my men, accoutred and ready to turn out in a second. Guard-day was in some sort a day of rest, for though during the night I went visiting sentries, or patrolling the streets every

hour, during the day I really did get repose. It was severe labour to me, for ever since we left Gundummuck I had been suffering from a terrible attack of diarrhœa, and was really very ill. I had neither time nor inclination, however, to lie up, as we had so few officers, there being at this time only two captains with my regiment fit for duty. Captain Younghusband was very badly wounded, and not likely to be able to resume active service for many months, perhaps years. Captain Wyndham had been killed, and others were unfit for duty in various ways.

The south gate of Jellalabad was visible from the roof of the house in which was our guard-room. The roof was flat, of beaten clay; and a little parapet wall which went round it was cracked in several places by earthquakes. While we occupied the town a sentry was stationed in the gateway, over which also was placed a man on the look-out, whose duty it was to report to the officer on guard anything he saw—horsemen passing, cattle grazing, people going in any direction, the smoke of fires in any place, clouds of dust, or anything that might indicate the presence or passage of a body of men. At this post and for this purpose a man was kept on duty from day-dawn to dusk. Adjoining the gate was a house or hut which was used as one of the guard-houses; and to the right, on the

wall, was another guard-house, and below it a road for the passage of artillery.

Soon after daybreak on the 1st of December, the enemy opened a tremendous fire from Piper's Hill, from the ravines, and from behind the mounds of rubbish in front of the west gate. They had some capital marksmen, and several of our men were shot through the loopholes. I saw an officer of the 13th put his cap upon the point of his sword and raise it just above the parapet, and in an instant a bullet was sent through it.

Sale now thought it high time to try conclusions with the enemy. They put an entire stop to our work; they cut off our supplies; and we had not more than thirty days' food in store. Besides, the people of the country were fast joining the enemy's ranks. To be of any service to our friends at Cabool, it was absolutely necessary that we should strike terror into these Affghans; that we should defeat and drive them off, and be undisputed masters of the whole valley. So quietly waiting until noon, when the ammunition and the energy of the enemy would be partly exhausted, and they would be thinking more of food than of fighting, a column of eleven hundred infantry was formed in the west street; and all the cavalry that could be mustered, with two of Abbott's guns, assembled in the south street. A little after one o'clock the gates

were thrown open, and out we rushed at the double, with a loud cheer. Colonel Dennie commanded. The moment we appeared outside, the enemy poured a heavy fire into us from the ravines and river bank to our right. I was immediately sent with my company in skirmishing order to keep them in check, and the sappers were ordered to the left to drive them off Piper's Hill, while the column advanced to attack the main body of the enemy at an old fort, some hundreds of yards to the front. The Affghans in front of the column stood bravely for a short time, and then gave way and retreated. The sappers had a tougher job. They were received with a very heavy fire from Piper's Hill, but they charged up and drove the enemy off. At this moment the cavalry and guns that had been some time filing out at the south gate, and getting into the plain beyond the old walls of the town, swept round the hill, and drove the Affghans back on the sappers, who shot and bayoneted a good many. The moment the cavalry and guns appeared on the plain clear of Piper's Hill, the whole body of the enemy fled in every direction. Those who were in flight from the ravines ran towards the river, and throwing away their swords and juzzails plunged into the stream, in which many were drowned. From Piper's Hill and from the old fort the enemy fled all over the

plain, scattering in every direction, numbers falling before the musketry. As long as anything like a mass was seen within range, the shot from Abbott's guns plunged through it with fearful accuracy, and the cavalry pursued the fugitives for miles, cutting down numbers, and chasing them out of all semblance of an organized body.

During the pursuit Captain Oldfield, commanding the cavalry, had been keeping his eye on a party of the fugitives, and as he galloped up he saw one man suddenly stop, throw off his turban, tear off his clothes, hastily wrap his waist-cloth round his loins, and attempting to personate a Hindoostanee, boldly advance to our people, calling out, "Shah bash, angréz" (well done the English); but the troopers were not to be deceived, and he was cut down instantly.

The idea the Affghans entertained of cooping us up in Jellalabad, and starving us into surrender, was good enough, but their plan of operations, conceived in ignorance of the power of science and organization to cope with superior numbers, and defeat brute force, was wretched enough. When the Affghans intend to build or repair a fort, they have to rummage the whole country for men with spades and other needful tools, and this they knew we could not do. They had no idea of an organized body of men, whose

principal arms, were spade, pickaxe, and bill-hook; therefore they could not conceive it possible that in the short space of eighteen days we could repair the walls and bastions, and put on them a parapet all round, at the same time felling the trees and levelling the houses and walls outside, and destroying all the cover so well known to them. They reckoned on having strong and snug places for their marksmen, from whence they could pick off our people, and as they sent a considerable body of fine shots, they made sure of keeping us shut up until the whole country could be raised and brought round us, when our conquest would be easy, indeed only a matter of time. They accounted for the defeat of the 11th by the fact that those who were engaged were merely the ordinary people of the valley and the surrounding districts, and not the picked men of the tribes, whom they had now. They did not calculate upon a sortie so soon, and when I came they were utterly unprepared for it.

I should remark here, that to Major Broadfoot's firmness and foresight, our brigade was mainly indebted for its honour and safety. When we were first sent out, Broadfoot was ordered to proceed without his tools, which he respectfully but firmly declined to do, and by his manly representations carried his point, and was allowed to take them with him. They did good service

all the way from Cabool, and now enabled us to put the various defences of this town into a complete state of repair, and to defy the whole power of the country.

Immediately after the action, we sent into the town for the necessary tools, and commenced at once to level the places behind which the enemy had stationed their marksmen. We returned at dusk very hungry and tired, but particularly well pleased with our day's work—our loss had been very small and our gain great.

At sunrise next morning, intelligence reached us that the fort the enemy had occupied was abandoned, with large stores of grain and fodder. Instantly every available baggage animal, under charge of a strong escort, was sent out. All the grain and fodder—everything useful—was brought in, even to the timber in the roofs of the houses, and the strong folding gates of the fort.

We now learned that Gool Mahomed, the Governor (under Dost Mahomed) of Jellalabad, who had been turned out by us, and his nephew, Azeez Khan, had persuaded the priests (moollahs) to preach a religious war (jāhād) against us; that this had raised the whole country, and roused their fanaticism; that two of the moollahs had been killed in the late action; and that the enemy had been totally dispersed.

This victory had a twofold greater effect than

the former, and its good results were immediately apparent. Provisions at once began to flow in, and people flocked to the town to sell flour, grain, and vegetables. But we were all so poor that, excepting the commissariat officer, very few could purchase anything. My stock of cash amounted to eleven rupees, and I was well off; many of the officers had no money at all, and we had no hopes of getting any. Fortunately, our mess manager had a small stock of cash, and a fair supply of things for the mess, or we should have been badly off indeed. In six weeks at the outside, we hoped affairs at Cabool would be settled. We had enough for our needs until then, but nothing to spare to our poor servants, who would soon be entirely dependent on the commissariat. The soldiers and camp-followers were worse off than ourselves. Copper coinage had nearly disappeared, and was so scarce that two pice went to the anna instead of four—that is, three pennies to the sixpenny-piece instead of six pennies. The commissariat had now six weeks' provisions in store, and more was flowing in daily. This was fortunate; but then came the question, Would the treasure-chest hold out?

The closing days of this year brought confirmation of the sad tidings that had already reached us—which we had looked upon as rumours, set afloat by the wishes of the Affghans

—that the whole country was in insurrection; that the Shah was shut up in the Bala Hissar, and our troops in the fortified cantonment; that Sir Alexander Burnes had been killed; that Ghuznee was besieged; and that the Gilzaees had occupied every pass and place of vantage between Gundummuck and Cabool.

The new year opened ominously, and brought us still more evil tidings. A letter from Cabool, from Pottinger, made us acquainted with the murder of the envoy and all that had led to it. But our garrison was neither dismayed nor disheartened; all scouted the idea of any great disaster happening to our troops at Cabool; and our works were pushed on with increased vigour, everyone, officers and men, working with a will. Provisions continued to come in, far beyond our daily wants, and the surplus was carefully stored. But we had not a drop of wine or spirits left, and as our officers, especially those who, like myself, were recovering from illness, felt that a little of the latter would be a great comfort to us whilst engaged in a hard and unusual labour, I agreed to try and set up a still. So I got a few rupees from such officers as had any, and immediately bought up all the coarse sugar in the town. There was no demand for it, so I got it cheap. Then I went round the city and collected all the washermen's earthen pots that were lying about;

large and wide-mouthed vessels, which held about twenty gallons each. Our quartermaster built me a shed, and put a door to it. On the floor I ranged the pots, ramming in between them plenty of good dry straw, and these were my fermenting vats. In an out-office at the back of our quarters I had a fire-place built, and in it placed a wide-mouthed pot, holding about ten gallons. This was my still, and a smaller pot, whose mouth would just go inside the larger, formed the still-head. Then I went to the garrison engineer and begged out of his store a very long matchlock barrel I had seen, and got it well cleaned out, and this was the worm. At right angles to the fire-place and joining it, I built a low wall, and on the top, which was as high as the still-head, I made a trough of well-tempered clay, in which I laid the worm. Then very carefully breaking a hole in the still-head I inserted the worm, and all was ready.

In the evening, when our dinner was over, I had a charge of the ferment put into the still, carefully luted on the head, put in the worm, and luted it in with fine clay, laid it in the trough, which I then filled with water, and lighted the fire. A crowd of eager spectators stood around watching the proceedings, many incredulous, a few hopeful. "Oh, bother, you don't expect to boil out any spirits in those old pots, do you?"

"Wait a bit."

First a drop came, then two, then four or five, and finally a slender stream. All were anxious to taste, and a wine-glass was produced. "Capital! Well done, S——, old fellow. Huzza!" I supplied every member of our mess with a small quantity of spirits every day for two months, but it was hard work.

The 9th of January was a day of humiliation to us, for a letter from General Elphinstone was brought in by a horseman from Cabool, acquainting us with the slaughter of the envoy and his own capitulation to Akber Khan, and at the same time ordering Sale to retire with his brigade to Peshawer, as part of the terms agreed upon. I don't know in what words Sale penned his reply, but the universal answer of the garrison was short and energetic, in the words of that celebrated character, Mr. Sam Waller, "they would see Mr. Akber Khan"—something unpleasant—"first."

It was a crushing, humiliating blow, and fell with terrible weight on the minds of all in the garrison, spreading a gloom over every heart. But sadness and humiliation are not despondency, and when soldiers see energy, prudence, and determination in a commander, their own hearts soon respond and rise to the emergency. When Sale's determination was made known—to hold Jellalabad until the Cabool force arrived—it

gave universal satisfaction, and our confidence in our commander was greater than ever. The greatest harmony existed between the European and native soldiers, and there was but one mind in the garrison—to defy the Affghans, to maintain the honour and fame of our arms, and to redeem, as far as possible, the reverses of the Cabool force. We had no money—the treasure-chest was nearly empty; ammunition we were short of, and of food we had little more than six weeks' supply in store. Money, however, we hoped to get from Peshawer, ammunition we would husband with jealous care, and in respect to food, we were put on half rations once more.

A number of Affghans had gradually returned to the town. Sale thought it advisable to turn them out, and to search for arms. This was done, and during the search, those engaged in it discovered, in the house of a moollah (priest), an excavation that had every appearance of a mine; there being a regular shaft, and a gallery leading towards an angle in the walls. The moollah was instantly kicked out, with every Affghan who could be found, and, as a further precaution against treachery, every house or wall touching the ramparts, except our own guard-houses, were knocked down, and a road was made all round the foot of the ramparts for the passage of artillery.

Immediately after the receipt of the disastrous intelligence from Cabool, an uneasy feeling began to rise in the minds of all the soldiers, and of the garrison generally, respecting the fidelity of the Khyberrie Juzzailchees, who, it may be remembered, brought off their English officers when the Janbazees mutinied at Gundummuck. This feeling continuing to increase, Sale did not think it prudent to disregard it. It was a disagreeable and painful business to send away these men. They had been faithful when the Janbazees mutinied—they had defended the cantonments against them, and when defence was no longer possible, leaving all they had to be plundered by the mutineers, they had brought their officers safe to our camp. They had fought bravely for us in every action and skirmish to this day. But, in spite of all this, the feeling of distrust in the minds of the garrison grew and increased from day to day. Whether it arose from any words let drop by the Khyberries, or it was merely an instinctive dread of treachery entertained by the soldiers, I could never ascertain; but whatever may have been its origin, Sale, on mature advice, dismissed the men, and as the last left the town, there was a sigh of satisfaction throughout the garrison as if some great danger had been averted.

Mining and treachery from the inside having been provided against, Sale now determined to

do his best to provide against mining from the outside, and against escalade also. A ditch was therefore commenced, fourteen feet wide, ten feet deep, which was to go all round the town, the men beginning their work at the seveaal points most liable to attack.

A stout parapet and banquette for the troops to fire from had been completed all round the walls, the bastions had been repaired, platforms had been laid, and the guns mounted on them. A large brass thirty-two pounder of native manufacture, found in the town, and called the Kazèk, had been mounted on a prominent bastion on the south face. All the shot had been collected, and ammunition prepared for this gun, which was to be used only in emergency.

To prevent our suffering from want of water, as the stream running through the town could easily be turned off by an enemy, an enormous well was sunk, which gave an unlimited supply. On the 11th of January, forty horsemen belonging to a friendly chief, Toora baz Khan, came in, bringing from Peshawer 21,000 rupees —a most timely and welcome supply, which at once gave vigour to our commissariat department.

CHAPTER X.

News of the Destruction of the Cabool Army—Dr. Brydon, the sole Survivor, comes in—A Goorkah and the Sergeant-Major 37th N.I. come in—Their Tales—The Great Earthquake—Our Defences Destroyed—Akber Khan with his Army appears before Jellalabad—Siege—Turned to Blockade—Progress of the Seige—Victory, 7th April—Akber Routed—Pollock and his Force arrive.

ON the 13th of January I was on guard at the south gate, when, a little after twelve o'clock, some one came rushing along the passage leading to our guard-room. The door was burst open, and Lieutenant B——, of my regiment, threw himself into my arms, exclaiming, "My God! S——, the whole of the Cabool army has been destroyed."

A few questions elicited from my breathless and agitated young friend all he knew of this dark and terrible tragedy. The whole army had been destroyed, one man alone escaping to tell the fearful tale. That man was Dr. Brydon, who had just come in. I know not upon what grounds, but Colonel Dennie, of the 13th, had constantly predicted this tragedy, and the very circumstance which had now come to pass. Cheering

up Lieutenant B—— we went outside, and saw Sale and his staff at the west or Cabool gate hoisting up one of the colours of the 13th—the Union—a defiance to the enemy, and a sign to any poor fugitive who might have escaped and wandered so far as to see it. A hearty cheer rose up from all of us who saw our country's glorious colours; and, despite the depression caused by the intelligence of this awful calamity, the spirits of the garrison rose as high as ever, though we all felt sorrow for the fate of our friends, and the disgrace that had fallen on our arms.

Instantly the whole of the cavalry went out, with orders to advance in the direction of Futteabad, as far as they could with safety. About four miles from Jellalabad they came on the bodies of three of Brydon's companions—Lieutenants Harper, Collyer, and Hopkins — all terribly mangled. Not another was found; nor was a soul seen on the road.

At night, lights were hung out above the Cabool gate, and two buglers at a time were put on duty in the south-west angle bastion to sound the advance every quarter of an hour, in hopes that some poor fugitive might hear it and be saved. A strong wind was blowing from the south-west, which sent the sound of the bugles all over the town; but it could not be heard half a mile in the direction of Cabool. The terrible wailing

sound of those bugles I shall never forget. It was a dirge for our slaughtered soldiers, and, heard through all the night, it had an inexpressibly mournful and depressing effect.

Dr. Brydon's tale struck horror into the hearts of all who heard it; but with that feeling of pity and regret for our slaughtered friends which it excited, came a fierce desire for vengeance. Little was said by any one, but the stern looks of the soldiers, the set teeth, and the convulsively-clenched hands, showed how profound was the impression it had made, and how stern the vow registered in each man's heart.

On the 19th, a servant of Captain Bazette came in, and on the 30th a Goorkah, one of the Shah Soojah's late force. On the 31st we had the pleasure of welcoming another white face—the sergeant-major of the late 37th—who came in from Tootoo, where he had been a prisoner with Major Griffiths of the 37th, and Captain Souter of the 44th, for the ransom of which officers he had been sent in to make arrangements.

From the accounts of the sergeant and the Goorkah I gathered many particulars regarding this awful tragedy, which, however, as they have been already accurately described by preceding writers on this subject, I shall merely, in order

to prevent any gap in my narrative, refer to in as few words as possible.

After the murder of the envoy, General Elphinstone agreed to evacuate the country, and retire with the whole of his force, the garrison of Jellalabad to march at once, Akber Khan on his part undertaking to escort the Cabool force, and guaranteeing it from attack. Upon this, Elphinstone, as a preliminary step, sent the order to Sale to withdraw to Peshawer, which was received as above mentioned. When the ill-fated Cabool force left cantonments, and before the rear had got outside the walls, the Affghans rushed in and commenced plundering. Akber persuaded General Elphinstone to make two marches to Bootkhak, distant only nine miles. To this General Elphinstone weakly consented, thus sealing the fate of the force. The delay gave the Affghans time to dispose of the plunder, and then to go on ahead to man the Khoord Cabool Pass, whilst the frost and snow, as Akber foresaw, was destroying the ill-clad native soldiers of Hindostan.

As soon as the force entered the Khoord Cabool Pass, the Affghans flew at the baggage, and then opened fire from all sides on our soldiers, who were shot down in hundreds. When the troops, after incredible difficulties, and with great loss of life, had got beyond the pass, a halt was again made.

Akber, when challenged with breach of faith in permitting the attack on our force, declared that he had not the power to control the Affghans, who were enraged at our people firing at them, and he advised the officers to surrender to him, as the best course which, in the circumstances, they could pursue. General Elphinstone and the officers accordingly placed themselves in Akber's hands, whilst the native soldiers, chilled to death, their hands and feet frost-bitten, went over to the enemy in hundreds, and were driven off to Cabool like a flock of sheep.

The sergeant said, "I cannot blame the natives. I am myself an inhabitant of, and born in a cold climate; I was well clad, as you perceive, I took every care of myself, yet my sufferings from the cold were terrible, my fingers were frost-bitten, and all my joints were sore."

During the halt at Khoord Cabool, the Affghans again went forward and manned the Huft Kothul Pass, nearly seventeen miles long, where a similar scene was enacted, numbers of our men being killed. The survivors of the slaughter that here took place halted at Teyzeen, from whence the fugitives (for all semblance of a column was gone) made one march to Jugdulluck. During this march the Affghans, tired of slaughter, stripped hundreds of the poor Hindostance camp-followers stark naked, and left them to perish

miserably of cold. At Jugdulluck, distant from Teyzeen twenty miles, the fugitives halted once more, many of them lying down never to rise again, the Affghans shooting at them as they lay dying of cold, fatigue, and hunger. Whilst the fugitives halted, Akber sent on messengers to prepare the people for their approach, and the country being roused, from thence to Gundumuck, our poor soldiers met the faces of fresh enemies at every step. A party of Affghans went forward into the Jugdulluck Pass and across the narrow part, the gully where so many of our rear-guard were killed, they formed an abattis, interlacing the branches of the felled trees. Brigadier Anquetil, who was in command, determined not to halt any longer, but to push on and get through the pass before the Affghans could arrive in any great numbers. On reaching the abattis, so strong was the desire of all to get through and to press forward, that in their anxiety to avoid the danger by which they knew they were menaced, all order and discipline was lost, and they became little better than a helpless mob. A regular panic was the consequence. The strong and armed thrust back the weak and unarmed, and each man scrambled through the abattis as well as he could. Whilst the foremost, in the eager desire to save their lives, were struggling to break through the interlacing

branches by which they were impeded, the Affghans rushed down upon the rest, cooped up in the narrow gully, and carried on the work of slaughter until they were themselves exhausted by the exertions which they made in their bloody task.

After getting through the abattis, Brigadier Anquetil went to the rear, for the purpose, it is supposed, of seeing what could be done to extricate the unhappy wretches that were yet left behind. The unlucky officer doubtless met the fate from which he was so anxious to save others, for he never came to the front again. On being missed, the 44th called out, "Where's our Brigadier?—where's our Brigadier?" and as no answer was returned to this importunate cry, all subordination was at an end; the men selected their own officers, and the wildest confusion ensued. Still, however, they pushed on.

As each European sank from fatigue or wounds, he was instantly disarmed by the camp-followers, or by the native soldiers who survived and had broken or thrown away their arms. The Goorkah before mentioned witnessed all that now occurred. He was a Mussulman, and spoke Persian fluently. Dressed as a Fakeer, he marched parallel to the fugitives, at some distance from the road, over the low hills to the left. H.M.'s 44th, he said, still kept together and pushed on, numbers

dropping from fatigue or from wounds inflicted by the Affghans, crowds of whom were stationed on every height and hill within gun-shot of the road, firing at our men, and cutting down without mercy such as dropped to the rear. This continued till the poor fugitives reached a low conical hill, close to Gundummuck, where, finding themselves completely surrounded, they were compelled to halt.

It was here, at some distance from the road, that the Goorkah was captured by the Affghans. Instead, however, of securing any advantage to himself by the betrayal of our men, he completely deceived the enemy by proposing to stop and see the end of the Feringhees. Looking on him as a very holy man, they listened with respect to all he said, and agreed to witness the "syle" or fun. Notwithstanding the hopelessness of their position, the 44th still showed a bold face to the enemy. There was a great deal of firing on both sides, but whenever the Affghans came near enough to the unfortunate regiment, it charged and drove them off easily. Their ammunition, however, was at length expended, and with their last round, which they seem to have reserved, they fired with terrible effect at the Affghans advancing against them sword in hand; and the feeble remnant, conscious that further resistance was useless, broke their ranks, threw down their arms, and dispersed.

All were killed except a few who were made prisoners by the Gundummuck chief, Ghoolam Jan, and some officers, who, being mounted on horses, galloped off—only, however, to meet their fate after an agonizing interval of suspense, in their effort to secure their safety, Dr. Brydon alone succeeding finally in effecting his escape.

That General Elphinstone's imbecility was the immediate cause of this disgrace and of these terrible disasters, is beyond all doubt; but the real author was he who selected for a post of such difficulty and responsibility a man crippled by gout in his hands and feet, whose nerves had succumbed to bodily suffering, and who was in no way remarkable for capacity.

These tales of disaster and disgrace only seemed to spur on the garrison of Jellalabad to greater exertion; for, as we should now have to face Akber Khan and all the warriors of Affghanistan, on us devolved the task of redeeming our country's fame.

On the 30th January the cavalry, under Mayne, went out and brought in 175 head of cattle that had been seen grazing at some distance off, and on the next day they went out again and brought in 731 sheep. Of these, Sale gave fifty to our regiment, and to our mess one for each officer, a provision which made us well off for meat for some time.

As soon as the ditch had been completed at all the weakest points of our fortification, work on Sunday was partially remitted, and we once more enjoyed the comfort of assembling for morning service. Everyone came, as usual, with sword and pistol, or musket and bayonet, and with sixty rounds in pouch, ready at a moment's notice to march to battle. To me it was always an affecting sight to see those great rough fellows of the 13th, with their heads bowed, humbly confessing their sins before God, and acknowledging their dependence on His goodness and mercy; and I am sure that, subsequently, when we were surrounded by greater perils than any we had yet encountered, there were many in the little band who felt the inexpressible comfort there was in having One to whom they could appeal in all their troubles and adversities.

The first days of February showed us that some movement of importance was taking place; for on the north bank of the river parties of armed men, who, as they passed by, amused themselves by coming down to the brink of the river and firing at our grass-cutters, were seen constantly going to the west, in the direction of Lughmān.

In the course of the next few days, intelligence was brought in that Akber Khan was collecting his forces, and intended to chapow us (make a

sudden attack). On our side, the General ordered that all able-bodied camp-followers who were willing should be embodied and armed, promising them the pay of native soldiers. Numbers came forward most willingly. All the spare muskets and rifles, with other accoutrements, were delivered to the strongest and most intelligent, and we soon had a small but serviceable body of men, among whom the camel-drivers were conspicuous. As there were not plenty of muskets for the whole, or even one-half of the men thus enrolled, the remainder were armed with pikes; and that there might be a sufficient number of these, Captain Abbott's armourers were set to work to fashion all the old iron procurable into pike-heads, shafts for which were fortunately found in a lot of half-wrought wood, which answered admirably. These novel recruits, when well drilled, made very efficient soldiers, and whenever a guard went out on the ramparts, or on any other duty, a proportion of these pike-men, whose appearance was really quite formidable, accompanied them.

Parties of Affghans still continued to move in the direction of Lughmān, and at length, on the 15th February, Akber Khan pitched his camp within sight of Jellalabad, about twelve miles off, on a spur of the Lughmān hills to the north of the river. According to the intelligence we received,

he had several guns with him, but as our fortifications were now in a respectable condition, we had no occasion to be alarmed at the skill of the Affghans as artillerists.

On the 16th rain came down in torrents, and did us this good service, that it very sensibly diminished the height of the mounds of rubbish formed by the remains of the houses and walls we had destroyed outside the town. On the morning of the 17th, myself and several officers heard repeated sounds coming down the valley, like the report of a heavy gun, fired at intervals, a long distance off. None of our spies were able to give us any information as to the source from which the explosions proceeded, nor were we able ourselves to account for them. On the 18th, we had rain again in heavy showers. The morning of the 19th was clear, but windy and cold. All the working parties were out at the usual time, and I was employed in lowering a part of the old walls of Jellalabad, close to Piper's Hill, so that the shot from the mountain-train guns near the south gate might plunge into the hollow between the two hills, which was a favourite haunt of the enemy's cavalry. From this point I could see the west and south sides of the town, and the whole of the plain and valley for miles. A little after eleven o'clock, there was a smart shock of an earthquake, accompanied by a rumbling noise.

As the motion, however, at first was slight, I did not take much notice of it, but when, almost in an instant, the rumbling increased and swelled to the loudest thunder, as if a thousand heavy waggons were driven at speed over a rough pavement, I turned quite sick, and an awful fear came over me. The ground heaved and set like the sea, and the whole plain appeared rolling in waves towards us. The motion was so violent that I was nearly thrown down, and I expected every moment to see the whole town swallowed up.

My eyes being attracted towards the fort, I saw that the houses, the walls, and the bastions were rocking and reeling in a most terrific manner, and falling into complete ruin, while all along the south and west faces, the parapets which had cost us so much labour, and had been erected with so much toil, were crumbling away like sand. The whole fort was enveloped in one immense impenetrable cloud of dust, out of which came cries of alarm and terror from the hundreds within. When the dreadful noise and quaking ceased, a dead silence succeeded, all being so deeply impressed by the terror of the scene, that they could not utter a word. The men were absolutely green with fear, and I felt myself that I was deadly pale. This silence was no less awful than the thunder of the rumbling,

for we expected it would be succeeded by something still more terrible. Presently a gentle breeze began to blow, and I spoke encouragingly to the men, set them to work again, and despatched a messenger into the fort for intelligence. Looking round the valley, I saw everywhere indications of the awful visitation. Every village, town, and fort was enveloped in dense clouds of dust, which so drew the attention of the men, that unconsciously all ceased working. From some of the forts exposed to the breeze, the dust was streaming away with an appearance as if the places were on fire; from others it rose up high in the air in thick dense columns, as if a mine had been exploded; not a village, town, or fort had escaped, all presenting the same indications of the dire calamity to which they had been subjected.

When the breeze had cleared away the dust from Jellalabad, the place presented an awful appearance of destruction and desolation. The upper stories of the houses that a few minutes before had reared themselves above the ramparts so trim and picturesque, were all gone, and beams, posts, doors, planks, windows, bits of walls, ends of roofs, earth and dust, all mingled together in one confused heap, were all that remained. It seemed as if some gigantic hand had taken up the houses, and thrown them down into the fort in one confused heap of rubbish.

The walls presented an equally awful appearance. The parapet all round had fallen, and was lying at the foot of the wall in heaps of rubbish; the walls were split through in many places; the outer surface of many of the bastions was split off, but, happily, leaving our guns. When my messenger returned, he brought us information that a breach had been made in the eastern wall, large enough for two companies abreast to march through.

I was preparing to return to the fort, when Sale's bugle sounded the assembly, and we went in at once. On muster being taken, it was found that the loss of life was happily only three men crushed, in the cavalry hospital.

Whilst the general and the engineer officer were taking a survey of the damage, and settling what was best to be done first, I had time to look round and see how great had been the destruction that had been effected in so short a time. A month's cannonading with a hundred pieces of heavy artillery could not have produced the damage that the earthquake had effected in a few seconds. Our walls, in which we took so much pride, and in which we had so much confidence, were in even a worse state than I have described. The hand of the Almighty had indeed humbled our pride, and taught us the wholesome lesson that He alone is a sure defence.

I found that our colonel (Colonel Monteath) had narrowly escaped with his life. He had been standing on the highest part of the wall on the eastern face, accompanied by his orderly, when the wall gave way, and he fell with the ruins. When he was taken out, it was found that, though he was severely bruised, he was not materially injured. The wall, as he afterwards told me, just before it fell wriggled like a snake.

In many places the walls were split longitudinally, so that, had the earthquake continued a few seconds longer, one half would have fallen inside, and the other half outside. In one place, as an officer was passing along the ramparts, the ground opened beneath him, and he fell in, but only to be thrown out again—an operation which was twice repeated. The wall at a certain spot on the river face had opened so wide that a man could have walked through.

On going to our mess-house, I found that the wall round the top, which was brick thick, and eight feet high, built to screen the ladies of the harem, was in ruins, and, curiously enough, each side had fallen inwards on the flat roof, bursting several of the large thick beams, which were obliged to be shored up. My room was uninjured. All our barracks and sheds were in ruins, and all shelter for the men was destroyed.

This, however, was not the time for idle wonder or for despair. Without a moment's delay every man in garrison was set to work, and though we had frequent shocks of earthquake during the day, by dusk the ruins had been cleared away, and a temporary parapet of clods of earth and clay made all round the walls.

Towards sunset, a small body of horsemen from Akber's camp came to reconnoitre. Abbott, who was on the look-out, sent a shot right into the party, making them scamper off, probably to report to their chief, when they returned to their camp, that our fortifications were uninjured, and that our "magic" had caused the earthquake, which had destroyed or damaged so many forts in the valley. But we were in a critical state, with our defences levelled, a huge breach in our works (on the east side fortunately—Akber's men came from the west), and the destroyer of our Cabool force within a few miles of us, with the whole power of the country at his back.

At early dawn on the 20th, every man in garrison was on foot, ready to commence work as soon as it was light enough, and officers and men laboured at their appointed task with a will, right heartily. For four days we were unmolested, Akber remaining on the north side of the Cabool river, and by the evening of the 24th the bastions were repaired, the parapet rebuilt all

round, and in many places double the strength it was before. The labour was terrible; and in the evenings my hands were so swelled I could scarcely close them on my knife and fork. During these four days not an officer or man took off his clothes. Everyone slept at his post on the ramparts, ready for defence if attacked, or for work at dawn of day.

On the 25th Akber crossed the river, and encamped within three miles of us, at a fort on the west side of Jellalabad. His cavalry began immediately to annoy our grass-cutters. The people of the valley, threatened by him, could no longer bring us supplies, and we had now to depend entirely on the store laid up by the commissariat. A few donkey-loads of flour were brought by night to our wicket, but the quantity was insignificant.

Our grass-cutters went out early on the morning of the 28th to their old ground, the foot of the low range of hills south of the town, and got their grass before there was any great stir in Akber's camp. At half-past ten, however, the whole force of that chief turned out and moved across the plain to the low hills to the south, his horsemen, who were upwards of two thousand all splendidly mounted, and bearing their standards, making a great show, and the foot soldiers following. At eleven o'clock Akber's

skirmishers rode up and reconnoitred Piper's Hill. Finding that none of our men were lying concealed, the foot soldiers advanced and opened fire on us from the hill. One horseman, who had the audacity to ride to the top and wave his sword in defiance, attracted my attention, and I often wondered if he could have been Akber himself.

Ammunition was so scarce, we could not allow the men to fire a shot that was not absolutely necessary; but the officers, having a good store of powder which they had laid in, hoping for some shooting in the Punjāb, now employed it usefully. They organised a very respectable corps of sharp-shooters among themselves, and with their rifles and double barrels did considerable execution amongst the enemy.

On the 1st of March the Affghans again moved round us in great force, with increased numbers of foot soldiers, but they retired at sunset, satisfied with this demonstration, and with having interrupted our grass-cutters. We had now daily fights for our forage. Our grass-cutters went out at earliest dawn, under a strong escort. If the enemy came down earlier, or in stronger numbers than usual, the grass was left on the ground just as it had been cut, and when the foe retired our grass-cutters would rush out, bundle it up as quickly as they could, and

clean it at leisure in the town. Perhaps I should explain that the grass in India, and in all hot, eastern countries, is a creeping grass, like our couch grass, the shoots running along under the ground, otherwise it would perish in the drought of summer. The grass-cutter, armed with a small hoe, four inches broad, with a short bent handle, sits down on his heels, and with a sweeping motion cuts the grass half an inch below the surface of the ground; he then collects it all with a bent forked stick, beats off the earth, makes up his grass into a bundle, and brings it home on his head. This grass is very sweet and nutritious. As the hot weather advanced, and the grass did not spring with its former rapidity, the grounds nearest the town became exhausted, and the difficulty of procuring forage for our cattle increased from day to day. The low ground between the river and the fort was our only resource, and up to the 8th of March we secured all our grass from this quarter every day but one.

On the 2nd of March Akber sent a considerable force round to the eastern side of Jellalabad, and we were completely invested. Up to this day the people of the country had every night brought small loads of flour and grain on donkeys to our wicket. Though the quantity was small it was very welcome, and now

that it was completely cut off we felt how valuable it had been. I find the following entry in my journal:—"2nd March. All our comforts are rapidly disappearing. Tea has long been gone; coffee has disappeared to-day; sugar on its last legs; butter gone; there is no grass for the cows; candles not to be had; wine and spirits are matters of memory. In a few days we shall be reduced to our rations of half a pound of salt beef and half a pound of coarse flour, and further reductions are in prospect."

Fights for our forage became every day more and more severe. Akber seemed to be awakening to the fact that his only chance of success was to try and starve us out, and from the 8th he pressed his investment more closely than ever.

On the 9th I find this ominous entry in my journal:—"No tiffin to-day; meat becoming scarce." I had still a small quantity of coffee and sugar left; they did not go far towards a meal, but a little drop stopped the great craving of hunger. Lead for our rifles was in great request; so some of the officers of the 13th hit upon a comical but effectual method of procuring it. They dressed up a figure and put it on a sort pole—cocked hat, red coat, painted face, not unlike a better sort of "Guy." Hoisted up above the ramparts, and managed adroitly, it created

no end of fun. It was laughable to see how eagerly the Affghans fired at it, and to hear the thousands of bullets sent over our heads, or their unceasing batter against the hard, clay walls. Whenever they thought the General was hit, or saw him bob down, they yelled and shouted like madmen. The figure was hit once or twice. Had a bit of a head been shown above the parapet, and been stationary for half a minute, it would have had a bullet through it instantly; but the Affghans had no idea of hitting a thing in motion. In the evening, when the enemy retired, or in the early morning, we used to go outside and pick up the bullets, of which immense numbers were found. In the course of half an hour one morning I picked up 121, but several officers picked up many more. The enemy now established themselves in the ravines at the north-west angle, and at the river face of the town planted their colours within eighty yards of the walls, erected breastworks of large clods of clay, and kept up an incessant fire on us.

From the 2nd of March, the day on which the enemy established a camp to the east of Jella bad, we all slept at our posts on the walls. No one took off his clothes, and the officers merely unbuckled their swords, and perhaps changed their boots. None of us wore any uni-

form—these were carefully put away; but we wore clothes made of camel-hair cloth. The digging, felling, moisture, dust, and mud, could not hurt them, and the dirt did not show. On the 10th of March it was whispered about that the enemy was driving a mine from the great ravine to the north-west angle bastion. There was little chance of that, however, for the substratum was of pure sand, which would require more material and greater engineering skill than the Affghans possessed; but as they had undoubtedly thronged the ravines for many days, had filled them with some of their best marksmen, and been very busy about something, Sale thought it advisable to see what they had been doing, and so ordered a sortie at daybreak, by a column of 800 men under Dennie.

The enemy had retired, as usual, during the night, so we met with no opposition, and whilst skirmishers were pushed forward in the direction of the Affghans, the ravines were thoroughly examined and the breastworks destroyed. They had been busy making places in the ravines for their marksmen. As we were retiring into the town, the enemy came on, pursuing us with loud yells and screams. Believing that we were driven back, their horse came boldly down towards the town, offering a splendid mark for Abbott, whose guns plied them with shot

and shell with deadly effect. Not a single horseman within one thousand two hundred yards could stand before Abbott's gun, his aim was so unerring. Ever since the siege of Bhurtpoor he had been celebrated for his skill as an artilleryman, and we had daily proof that his fame was well deserved.

After our men had retired, the enemy were seen dragging a gun over the plain, at a considerable détour, to avoid our shot. Their intention was to plant it on Piper's Hill. This would have been awkward; it would have caused us great loss of life, for it would have commanded every part of the town; no one could have shown himself, and we should have been compelled to capture it at all risks. They were allowed to mature their plans, and at Abbott's request the word was passed round the walls and not a shot was fired at them. The enemy grew confident, and in a short time boldly showed themselves on the hill; but as soon as a good number were collected on the top, levelling a place for the gun, Abbott carefully prepared a shrapnel, fired, and killed five of them, and wounded several others. The gun was soon taken back to Akber's camp.

During the night of the 12th the rain came down in torrents, and we were all miserably wet. The enemy left their posts and quietly slipped off to their camp. At daybreak—half-past four—a

party of five hundred men, sent out with tools, thoroughly destroyed the enemy's breastworks and sloped off the shoulders of the great ravine opposite the north-west angle bastion, opening it so completely to the fire of our sharp-shooters that no man could enter it with impunity, or pass along under the high bank to get to the ravines opposite our water-gate.

Again I find in my journal: "Very short commons—some of our officers going to try horse-flesh. I shan't."

When the enemy came down to their usual places in the ravines and found their breastworks levelled and the ravine opened, they were disgusted, and many went off to Piper's Hill; but their marksmen, splendid shots and bold fellows, tried to pass the mouth of the great ravine with a view to get to the caverns in front of the water-gate. We had small loop-holes made in the parapet of the north-west bastion, and getting chairs, we remained on the look-out—one officer always watching, one ready to fire. The enemy would always peep round the shoulder of the ravine when preparing to run past. "Look out," we would exclaim, "here's a fellow preparing to bolt." The fellow bolted, the shot was fired and struck him, and we could generally see him fall headlong under the opposite bank. In this way we killed six or seven out of a dozen, and in

three days quite sickened the enemy of trying to occupy the ravines, or to pass along under the high bank.

A little grass for our horses we got almost every day by fighting for it, but as it was not nearly enough for all the cattle, and the grass in store was of necessity kept for the gun and cavalry horses, it was determined to kill all the Government baggage cattle and ponies.

A large body of foot soldiers joined Akber on the 14th, and on that day, with a view to investing us more completely, and cutting off our forage entirely, the enemy took possession of and repaired an old tower 1050 yards from our walls, on the verge of the low ground between the high bank and the river. From this tower they could readily annoy our people cutting grass; it formed a support for the parties they sent out to attack them, and it was a permanent post which they occupied to the end of the siege. Each day we had to fight more and more sternly to get even a handful of grass. We almost always did get some, but it was at the expense of several men killed and wounded. The enemy, too, always suffered more severely than ourselves; but to them a few men more or less was nothing—they had the whole country to recruit from; to us, these daily losses were a deadly consumption, eating into our very life. Our daily work now was pushing on

barracks for our men, attending to our internal defences and the state of the town, and preparing for the hot weather. And thus the month progressed—fighting or working by day and watching by night, and all the time on half rations. We knew that Government was assembling a force at Peshawer under Pollock, in order to relieve us. We got letters occasionally from our political agent at that place, Captain Mackeson, but as they only told us that the day for Pollock's advance was deferred, they were anything but encouraging.

We had long been on half rations of salt meat and coarse flour. Half a pound of salt meat, including bone, was not much, but even at that rate our store of food was diminishing with alarming rapidity. In a few days it would again be reduced by half, and then we should have to give all the flour to the native soldiers and camp-followers, and kill the cattle and horses for the European soldiers and officers. But besides the labour of our daily work and the unceasing vigilance required to be maintained at night against attack and surprise by the enemy, we were kept in a constant state of anxiety and alarm by the perpetual recurrence of earthquakes. We did not know but that at any moment our walls might be levelled by this fearful visitation. This hard work, and watching at night, began to

tell on us, and the men looked thin and pale. As we were threatened with an escalade, every man was on the ramparts night and day, and rounds and patrols were kept going all night, as I have already described. No one, however, complained, we were doing the right thing; but all were angry with Sale, that he would not go out and fight. We felt perfectly capable of going outside and "squaring accounts" with Akber and his legion; and it was provoking that "Fighting Bob," as Sale was formerly called, would not come up to his name.

At two o'clock on the 20th we were visited by so violent a shock of earthquake that we were greatly alarmed. Some old walls were thrown down, and our ramparts were again split in several places. A party of the enemy's horse came down to reconnoitre, expecting to see our walls destroyed; but they had been mercifully saved from real damage, though our anxiety was increased tenfold. To starvation staring us in the face, and a merciless enemy outside our walls, eager to destroy the infidels, there was superadded this awful enemy beneath our feet, whose coming no one could foresee—whose might no one could withstand.

In consequence of the escalade with which we were threatened, we sent out parties of men, as opportunity offered, and collected numbers of

large round stones, from two to eight pounds weight. These we put in piles at convenient distances along the ramparts, ready for use, and I can assure my readers that a "good lump of a stone" is an ugly weapon in the hands of a strong man on the top of a lofty wall, and will clear a rickety scaling ladder as well as anything.

Every Sunday we had divine service; the English troops assembled in the commissariat yard, as the most convenient spot, for being surrounded with a lofty wall, we were pretty safe from chance shots. The service was a great consolation to all.

Night after night we were constantly roused from our short snatches of sleep by earthquakes. It was excessively disagreeable and utterly wearying; we could never accustom ourselves to them so as to let them pass unheeded. The slighter ones we might disregard, but then a sharper shock would come, with a violent heave and a short cracking sound, when all would start up, look anxiously round, listen, and then lay their wearied limbs to rest, only to be roused up again.

We now became aware that Akber began to look on his enterprise against us as hopeless. He was not aware of the state of our commissariat; we knew that there were many defections from his camp, and we were now pretty sure that, if our provisions were likely to fail before Pollock

could reach us, Sale would go out and fight, and that of course we should beat Akber. Meanwhile, though every one was indignant, Sale studiously avoided every chance of an encounter with Akber's greatly superior numbers; but calm consideration showed us he was right. We were not so very desperately pressed for food, we had still in store sufficient to last us some days at half rations, and if necessary, the English soldiers could fall back upon horse-flesh. Sale knew that if Pollock would make a timely advance we must win the game, and he did not feel justified in risking the certainty.

Some messengers came in from Peshawer on the 25th, and were kept in the General's house. They expressed their surprise at all they saw and heard. They heard the men of the 13th in fits of laughter at some absurd game they were playing, and all the native soldiers singing in chorus the songs usual at the season (the Hoolee Festival). "Why," they said, "you are killa-bund (besieged), and in such a position people are always low-spirited and sad, whereas you are all as merry as possible." When they witnessed the ease with which a party of Akber's men were beaten in a fight for some grass, they were utterly confounded. When they returned to Peshawer, all this went down the road to the Khyber with wonderful additions—it was just the sort of tale

that in the mouths of such men would not lose in the telling.

All this time the greatest cordiality and good feeling prevailed between the European and native soldiers; only one instance of disagreement ever came to my ears. I made a short note of it in my journal, and it may be interesting. After a shower of rain the unpaved streets of the town always became a mass of mud, leaving only a little path at each side, scarcely wider than a shoe; of course, when two people passed each other, it required the nicest management to prevent one or both going into the mud. A sepoy of my company met a soldier of the 13th in this narrow path; the soldier overbalanced himself and stepped into the mud. Being a very hot-tempered man, without a moment's consideration he struck the sepoy a violent blow. The latter immediately came off to make his complaint to me. The matter was on the instant referred to Sale, who was exceedingly angry, blew-up the soldier fearfully, and ordered him into confinement, with a view to further proceedings. As the adjutant was marching the soldier off, the sepoy took Sale by the hand, and said, "General Sahib, forgive him; there has not been one quarrel between any of us ever since the regiments have been together, why should there be now? You have scolded him, so pray forgive

him." The General granted the sepoy's request. The soldier said he was very sorry he had given way to his temper and struck a man who could behave so generously.

Great numbers of the soldiers had friends amongst the sepoys, with whom they were always walking, and I have more than once known a soldier, when dying, send for his sepoy friend to be with him in his last moments.

Our meals at mess were now a regular scramble; those who came half a minute late got nothing, but the descendant of the Prophet took care of me, and I generally got a little of something. The messes of the 13th and the cavalry had for some days been given up; we were better off, for when we started from Cabool, our mess manager, expecting several officers on their way to Hindostan would join us, had laid in a double stock of everything, and as we had lost two of our own officers our stores lasted much longer. Very questionable-looking pieces of salt meat were now put on table every day; I would not touch them, but out of my allowance of coarse flour Hyder cooked me some unleavened cakes. One day looking over the boxes where my stores had been, and hoping to find something to eat, I came upon a native jar that looked empty, but on tilting it up I found it was half full of preserved quinces, which I had ordered Hyder to

throw away. He had fortunately forgotten to do so. Small as bantam's eggs, hard as wood, and in ordinary times frightfully indigestible, what a treasure they now proved! I allowed myself one a day, and on each alternate day two; they kept off that gnawing, sickening pain caused by great hunger.

On the 29th, there was a great stir in the enemy's camp, and large bodies of horsemen were seen going over the hills to the south of the town. Presently two bodies of horse and foot, with flags displayed, moved out from Akber's camp, taking a gun with them. It was one of Captain Backhouse's mountain-train guns, taken from General Elphinstone at Khoord-Cabool. How enraged we were to see it dragged along just within gun-shot! Our artillery officers tried to knock it over, but could not; it was fourteen hundred yards distant, going along at four miles an hour, and we had no percussion tubes for nice firing. Sale would not let us go out and capture it.

Whilst we were being thus cruelly tantalized, the enemy's camp east of Jellalabad was struck, and the force moved west to rejoin the main camp. Akber had so managed that the two parties met at the point of danger, directly south of the town. He calculated that their united strength would deter us from making any at-

tempt to capture the gun, or that they would be strong enough to keep us in check until he could come up with the remainder of his troops. It was a capital move, but Sale's was a better—to keep quiet, and do nothing that would prevent Akber from weakening his force by detaching so large a portion of it; then, if our provisions failed, we could go out, engage him on more equal terms, and of course beat him. This would either disperse the Khyberries, or we should be free to march and take them in rear, whilst Pollock operated on their front. Akber in the meantime was not idle. Anxious to starve our cattle, our artillery and cavalry horses, he now adopted another plan. He caused large flocks of sheep to be driven over our more distant forage-grounds; which would of course confine us to those in the immediate vicinity of Jellalabad, within range of the guns—in fact, where the grass, cut over and over again, would of course soon cease to be productive.

On the 30th we saw these flocks of sheep going over our forage-grounds within range of our guns, and every one of us looked on them with hungry eyes. In the evening we beheld a considerable body of horse go to the old camp east of Jellalabad; we supposed they had a small post there, and that these troops had been sent to hinder our foragers and stop our cossids (messengers). The

enemy seemed determined to annoy us as much as possible, for on the morning of the 31st they drove a large flock of sheep within eight hundred yards of our walls. Sale was asked to let us go out and try to capture them, but he would not, and, deeply disgusted and much disheartened, we saw the perambulating chops and legs of mutton vanish in the distance.

When soldiers have been starving for weeks, the prospect of a succession of good dinners is not a little exhilarating to their spirits; but when these dinners are to be obtained at the expense of the enemy, who, having been the cause of their privations, has been triumphing over them during their forced abstinence, and when the obtaining the materials for those dinners will defeat the well-laid plans of their opponents, the pleasures of hope are enhanced by this prospect of revenge—a mighty spur to the soldiers' exertions. In my journal is the following entry:—"1st April.—This morning a flock of sheep was driven by the enemy's shepherds close to the old ruined fort near Piper's Hill." On seeing this, several officers got round Sale, and fairly badgered him into making an attempt to carry them off. Two hundred men of the 13th, the same number of the 35th, the whole of the cavalry, and a large body of our pikemen were ordered out. Just before we sallied forth, I heard a man on the walls

say to a friend, "I say, Bill, what a lark if we can get in all them sheep!" In less than ten minutes from the time Sale gave permission the south gate was thrown open, the cavalry marched out, and set off at full gallop to get round the sheep; the infantry followed at a run, accompanied by the pikemen. At the same time the north or water gate was thrown open, and two hundred sappers rushed out and commenced a sharp fusilade upon the enemy in the ravines, so as to draw their attention from our little "lark" and keep them in check.

The cavalry soon got round the sheep, which, as soon as they saw the horses, instantly ran up into a mass, and were at once driven forward to meet the infantry. As soon as we got up to them we halted, made over the sheep to the pikemen, and sent the cavalry away, whilst we extended in skirmishing order to receive the enemy, who were coming on in large numbers. Our pikemen soon got the whole flock inside the south gate, the last one dropping a lamb on the very threshold. We now retired as fast as possible; but before we could reach the gate, some of the enemy got on the top of Piper's Hill, and we had one man killed and eight slightly wounded. We were all in the highest spirits, and when the enemy, dancing with rage, showed themselves on the height, they were saluted with shouts

of laughter and "B-a-a—B-a-a!" all along the walls. We got four hundred and eighty-one sheep and a few goats; which gave sixteen days' meat for all the Europeans in garrison, at three-quarter rations. The General gave forty sheep to the men of my regiment, but as they knew that for many days the Europeans had received only six ounces of meat, including bones, daily, they, with great good feeling, desired that the sheep should be given to the English soldiers, for whom they said such food was necessary, and that they themselves could do very well for some days yet on the rations they were allowed.

This act elicited the following letter from the 13th:—

To Colonel Dennie,
Commanding H.M.'s 13th L.I.

Sir,—In the name of the N.C.O. and privates of the regiment under your command, I trust you will pardon my addressing to you this letter, requesting you will have the goodness to communicate to our brother soldiers of the 35th N.I. our thanks for the good feeling evinced towards us in giving us their share of yesterday's capture, more especially at the present time of the garrison being on reduced rations.

Believe me, sir, that feeling is more gratifying

to us than the value of the gift, and we shall ever feel the obligation our old comrades and brother campaigners have placed us under.

I have, &c.

(Signed) GEORGE MUNROWD,
Serjt.-Major H.M.'s 13th.

Jellalabad, April 1st, 1842.

All this added greatly to our satisfaction at this timely capture, and made us as merry—as possible, I was nearly saying; but an addition to our enjoyment was in store for us. On the 3rd, a spy came in and told us that when Akber learnt that we had captured his sheep, he burst into such a transport of fury, that his people were afraid to go near him. Spies and messengers came and went with greater facility, now that the enemy's camp to the east of the town had been removed. Reports and news came in rapid succession, varying in import with each coming hour.

On the 6th of April intelligence was brought in that Pollock had been repulsed in the Khyber Pass, and at noon Akber fired a royal salute in honour of the victory. Colonel Monteath, Colonel Dennie, and the heads of corps and departments went to Sale and urged on him the absolute necessity of going out and giving battle to Akber. A victory once obtained, of which no one doubted, the Khyberries would disperse, or

we could march to Dukka, at our end of the pass, act in their rear, and so assist Pollock. Sale saw that the time for action had arrived.

On the morning of the 7th of April, strong guards were posted at the gates, a picket in the centre of the town, and the whole body of pikemen and armed camp followers, with such of the sick and wounded soldiers as could hobble out, were sent to man the walls, and a very respectable show they made. The infantry formed into three columns under Dennie, Monteath, and Havelock at the west gate, the artillery under Abbott and Backhouse, and the cavalry under Oldfield and Mayne at the south gate, were waiting for daylight. With the first peep of dawn the gates were quietly opened and the columns sallied out. Sale, in concert with the colonels of corps and the staff, had arranged a simple plan of attack: to march direct upon Akber's camp, to burn it, to drive him into the river, and to bring off his guns. Havelock's column, made up of the sappers and a company each from the 13th and 35th, was to be on the right, to clear the ground along the river, the 13th and ourselves to go direct to the camp.

As soon as Havelock's column got into position, it was fired on by the enemy's outposts. At 800 yards from the west gate was a ruinous fort, part of which the enemy had recently patched up

and occupied as an outpost. There were two or three hundred men in it, who fired on our centre column as we advanced. Sale, whose blood was up, unfortunately ordered an attack upon this post instead of adhering to his original plan, disregarding all minor matters and marching direct on Akber's camp. The enemy had built up the gateway and constructed a narrow passage leading to it, through which only one man at a time could pass, and this was commanded by several loopholes. The guns were ordered up, and the assault commenced. It was found impossible to force an entrance. Colonel Dennie was mortally wounded, much time and several valuable lives were lost, and Sale, finding that an offhand assault like this could not succeed, called off the troops and gave orders for the advance, which were obeyed with joy.

But in the meantime the sound of the guns and the rattle of musketry had roused the whole of Akber's force, and they were turning out in thousands. It was a grand sight to see their large masses of horse coming down. At once they charged boldly on Havelock's column, which, rapidly thrown into square, received them with the greatest coolness, and repulsed them with heavy loss. They then made an attack upon our left, trying to turn the flank of the 13th, which was now on the left, for on withdrawing from

the fort, the regiment had made a détour so as to get out of the line of fire, and on advancing we edged off to the right to take their old place. But this attack of the horse did not cause the 13th to slacken their pace in the least, for at this moment two guns of Abbott's battery came up and sent shot and shell crashing into the enemy's ranks, making them recoil faster than they had advanced. Whilst we were making a halt to enable the 13th to come up, our colonel sent out his skirmishers to keep down the fire of a large body of the enemy posted in and around a garden, who were beginning to annoy us; they were speedily driven out, and the three columns being once more in line, again advanced.

We soon came within sight of the enemy's camp, from whence they opened fire on us with shot and shell from their guns, which caused us some loss. The columns were not checked for a moment, but moving on rapidly were soon well up to the camp. We made a rush at it, and carried it without a check, the enemy flying through the groves of trees beyond. They attempted to carry off one of the guns, but a shot by Abbott killed the two horses attached to the limber, and the artillerymen fled. Our skirmishers and two guns pursued the enemy beyond the grove. We saw numbers of them throw themselves into the river, which, swollen and

rapid, destroyed the greatest portion of them. The enemy's horse hung about for some time, but our cavalry and guns making a demonstration against them, they moved off, going along the banks of the stream.

The whole of Akber's camp fell into our hands. His guns, ammunition, standards, and plunder—everything he had with him. The bugle soon recalled our skirmishers, and I was detached with a party to fire the tents, and the huts, made of boughs and reeds. They were very numerous, and the smoke of the burning proclaimed our victory to the whole valley. Numbers of camels and mounds of grain fell into our hands. I secured three noble camels for myself, and right good service they did me subsequently.

Sale was anxious to get back to Jellalabad, as news of Pollock might arrive from the Khyber; so putting some spare horses to the captured guns, and loading such cattle as came out from Jellalabad, with whatever was most useful, and each man carrying off what he pleased, we returned in triumph, and were received with loud cheers from the walls, and with hearty congratulations on this important victory. In spite, too, of the woful mistake made in attacking the enemy's outpost in the old fort, our loss was surprisingly small—amounting, in the infantry and artillery, to eleven officers and men killed,

and fifty wounded. But Dennie's loss was serious, and much felt.

I must not omit to state that our columns had no sooner advanced beyond the fort where Dennie fell, than its garrison fled helter-skelter, rushed to the banks of the river, and plunged in headlong, leaving behind them shoes, clothes, and everything they possessed, a few alone saving their arms. A little after dark, information was brought us, by some Hindostanees living in the valley, that every fort and village within eight miles was deserted.

This night we slept in bed perfectly undisturbed. After passing the last thirty-six nights on the ramparts, armed and accoutred, constantly roused by the enemy, by our own rounds, by the relief of sentries, by visits from the field officer of the day, by those terrible earthquakes—many nights drenched by rain, from which we had to shelter ourselves as best we could—undisturbed rest in bed for the whole night was an unspeakable luxury; but coupled with the remembrance that, unassisted, we had broken the toils cast around us by Akber Khan, that we had beaten in fair fight the man who had destroyed our Cabool army, that our months of toil, watching, anxiety, and peril had been crowned with glorious success, that our country's honour was safe in our hands, and that there was not an enemy or a care to

disturb our repose, it was positive bliss, such as few have had the happiness to taste. On this night even the earthquakes spared us; hitherto they had been the greatest enemies to our repose. They came suddenly and sharp, like an electric shock, sometimes accompanied by a rumbling sound, sometimes by a sharp crack; and the sound and motion being augmented by the ramparts on which we slept, and intensified by the silence and darkness of the night, they invariably roused everybody, and kept us awake by the awe and dread they inspired. No one could shake off the feeling caused by the great earthquake, or repel the thought of what might happen should a similar calamity visit us in the darkness of the night. From the 19th of January to this date we had been visited by upwards of 130 shocks. I observed that, when earthquakes occurred, they always followed rain, coming with greater violence and frequency immediately after it, thus raising the question whether steam may not in some way be the origin of the phenomenon.

A little after sunrise next morning I went out with several officers to visit the scene of our late action. The commissariat people were already at work, carrying off the large mounds of grain Akber had accumulated, and numerous camp-followers were roaming about, picking up what they could find. We went into the fort close to

the camp and found a quantity of ammunition for the re-captured guns, amounting to 580 rounds, a valuable prize. A lot of fowls which were flying about loose we captured and divided, and I rode home with five in each hand, which gave us a fine dinner that evening. Provisions now began to pour in, and we lived on the fat of the land. We had quite a respectable bazaar every day outside the town; numbers of old acquaintances bringing provisions of all kinds, and many luxuries, with donkey-loads of snow from the mountains. News came in that Pollock had forced the Khyber pass, and would be at Jellalabad about the 15th.

At length, on the morning of the 14th, we could see, with our glasses, from the highest point of our walls, Pollock's force marching into camp at Ali Boghān. The force so long and so anxiously expected was close at hand, but we looked upon its arrival with far different feelings from those we should have experienced eight days earlier. They had not arrived in time to help us in our imminent peril, and they had lost the grand opportunity of joining with us to crush the man whose treachery had destroyed our brethren in arms, and so many thousands of unarmed camp-followers, whose bones were scattered in the Cabool passes. A fifth part of the cavalry with Pollock would have enabled us to annihilate

Akber and all his troops, for after their defeat they were for hours searching for a practicable ford across the river, to enable them to escape into Lughmān. So when next morning Pollock's force arrived, there was a hearty welcome, but a sly bit of sarcasm in the tune to which the band of the 13th played them in, "Ye're o'er lang o' comin'."

Pollock's delay at Peshawer was so keenly felt by all hands, that the men of the 13th composed and circulated a general order to this effect:—"The Governor-General has the greatest satisfaction in tendering to General Pollock his best thanks for his gallantry and good conduct in so firmly maintaining his post in General Avitabile's comfortable house at Peshawer, in spite of the urgent necessity for leaving it, to advance to the rescue of the British garrison beleaguered in Jellalabad."

It was a capital joke; but the cause of Pollock's delay was unfortunately beyond his control—he could neither annihilate time nor space, so as to hasten up the troops that were coming to join him.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
SAVILL AND EDWARDS, PRINTERS, CHANDOS STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.

00020265

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 19 September, 2016